

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: PRELIMINARY VALIDATION OF THE
PLAUSIBILITY OF INTRARACIAL MARRIAGE
SCALE: A STUDY OF UPWARDLY MOBILE
AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN

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Family Science

Like many Americans, African American women often view marriage as an important life goal; however, it is likely that many also view it as one that is out of reach (Dixon, 2009; Wallace, 2014). The present study sought to address this issue by developing a new measure to assess African American women's experiences in this regard in hopes of shedding light on how it impacts their dating and mating experiences. A total of 251 heterosexual African American women who were either enrolled in college or who had completed some form of postsecondary education completed an online survey assessing a variety of topics including their attitudes and emotions regarding a shortage of marriageable men, their standards to marry, and their willingness to date interracially. Results from this study established preliminary construct validity for a new scale assessing African American women's attitudes and emotions about the shortage of "marriageable" African American men.

PRELIMINARY VALIDATION OF THE *PLAUSIBILITY OF INTRARACIAL
MARRIAGE SCALE*: A STUDY OF UPWARDLY MOBILE AFRICAN
AMERICAN WOMEN

by

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Introduction

Marriage is revered as the ideal romantic relationship status in American culture and society at large (Amato, 2007; Cherlin, 2010; King, 1999; Knee, 1998). It is more prevalent in the United States than it is in nearly all other developed Western countries and has long been supported by laws and policies created by the U.S. government (Cherlin, 2005). Researchers have discovered correlations that suggest married individuals are happier, experience less stress, and have less mental and emotional pathology (Coomb, 1991; Waite & Gallagher, 2002; Wilson & Oswald, 2005) than non-married individuals. Although the benefits of marriage are clear, for many African Americans, attaining marriage is an elusive goal. While there has been a rise in the number of never-married adults in all racial/ethnic groups in the United States, the rates of increase have been most dramatic among African Americans (Wang & Parker, 2014). Between 1960 and 2012, the number of never-married African American adults over the age of 25 has quadrupled, increasing from 9% to 36% compared to increases from 8% to 16% for White Americans. Information about Hispanic and Asian American marriage rates began to be formally collected in 1980 (Wang & Parker, 2014). [1]

The dramatic increase in never-married African American adults is not the result of lack of interest in marital unions. To the contrary, African Americans express positive attitudes toward and a strong desire to marry (Hatchett, Veroff, & Douvan, 1995 ; Haynes, 2000; Ross, 1997). This interest is true across all income levels, but is particularly so for African Americans who are highly educated and earn higher incomes (Porter & Bronzaft, 1995). Unlike for other groups, a number of structural barriers make marriage harder to

attain and also limit the pool of African American “marriageable men,” that is men who are gainfully employed and economically stable (Wilson, 1987). These realities feed the perception that there is a shortage of “marriageable” African American men (Ferguson, Quinn, Eng, & Sandelowski, 2006; Hall, Lee, & Witherspoon, 2014; Wilson, 1987). Despite the longstanding nature of this reality, no measures of the perception of the shortage exist. Such research is imperative since it is this perception of a shortage that has the potential to influence mate selection practices, sexual decision-making and risk-taking, a woman’s sense of optimism about her future, and long-term relationship satisfaction within the African American community.

A Brief Review of the Research on African American Marriages

The pathways to and the experiences of marriage for African Americans are unique in terms of mate availability, family stability, and legal recognition for African American unions (Burton, 1990; Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995; Wilson, 1987). Historically, forced separation and the harsh realities of slavery encouraged the maintenance of extended kinship networks and close family ties. Despite the larger, communal focus, Africans and African Americans maintained the desire to establish a conjugal bond through marriage. Marriage rates soared for this population post emancipation and continued to climb through the mid 20th century (Wallace, 2014). In the limited research that has been done on this phenomenon of African American marriage patterns, participants continue to consistently indicate a strong desire to marry (Porter & Bronzaft, 1995; Ross, 1997). For some, marriage (and the subsequent combination of shared resources and support) is regarded as an avenue to success (Hall et al., 2014).

Marital unions between slaves and the legacy of slavery. The first African American marriages were marriages between slaves (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995). They were not legally recognized and could be ruptured at any time because family members could be easily sold or auctioned off (Cherlin, 2005; Ruggles, 1997). Sometimes it was the domestic slave trade that encouraged slave owners to ship men, women, and children to different parts of the rural South; in other cases, the masters split families because of economic priorities (e.g., the need to sell slave property to pay off debts) (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995). Regardless of the reason, there were many instances in which slave marriages, families, and communities were threatened. In instances in which African men were removed from the family unit and sold to other slave owners elsewhere, women were left to take care of the family and/or learn to live without male support.

Nevertheless, African and African American slaves greatly valued marriage traditions and their marital relationships. They often crafted rituals that established their identity and countered the slaveholders' attempts to cast them as childish, immoral, and gender neutral, choosing to view marriage as a permanent commitment instead (O'Neil, 2009; Will, 1999). To this end, slaves married when possible. The wedding ceremonies were often officiated by the slave owners and often did not involve a legal contract (Will, 1999). Slaves created their own intricate ceremonies to formalize and legitimize their legally invisible personal relationships as best they could (Will, 1999). The only instances in which their unions were legally recognized were when they were officially recognized in the state as a free person. This backdrop is the historical context in which African American men and women mate and date today. For several centuries, their unions were neither

legally recognized nor respected. The degradation of African American relationships continues today, even within the African American community, leaving many women to feel as though finding a stable relationship is an incredibly daunting task. Such a mindset likely affects their emotional and attitudinal response to a shortage of eligible, marriageable men available to them.

Statement of the Problem

African American women are faced with difficult decisions about how to most appropriately navigate the dating pool as they contend with various structural and cultural factors that influence the availability of marriageable men in the dating market (e.g., high unemployment and underemployment, incarceration, and interracial marriage rates). Although a small number of studies have explored the sex ratio imbalance within the African American community (Ferguson et al., 2006; Hall et al., 2014; Porter & Bronzaft, 1995; Ross, 1997), almost no research has investigated African American women's perceptions of the shortage of educated and gainfully employed African American men. Several popular media outlets including news outlets, television shows, and magazine articles have addressed the issue, but no scientific evidence has emerged (Lucas, 2011; Penn, 2015; Tan, 2015; Reeves & Rodrigue, 2015).

Like many Americans, African American women often view marriage as an important life goal (Dixon, 2009; Wallace, 2014). Given the literature reviewed below, it is likely that some view the goal as one that may be out of reach. It is speculated that the perception of a shortage of "marriageable" African American men may predict several aspects of African American women's dating and mate selection behavior, and also

potentially the behavior of their romantic partners. This research is critically important in the quest to understand relationship experiences within the African American community and gain a greater understanding of the ways that African American women's perceptions of the shortage are shaped by their attitudinal and affective realities.

Purpose

This research is intended to construct and validate a new measure that assesses African American women's emotional and attitudinal response to the shortage of eligible or "marriageable" (i.e., college-educated and gainfully employed) African American men. In other words, this study seeks to determine to what extent do women perceive that there are not enough men available to date and what psychological processes (i.e., attitudinal or affective) are associated with the perception of this shortage. The measure has two dimensions: attitudinal and affective. The attitudinal dimension refers to African American women's attributions, assumptions, and beliefs regarding the shortage. The affective dimension refers to the degrees of emotions women may report in response to a perceived shortage, including fear, sadness, frustration, disillusionment, or resignation.

Existing data that have been collected regarding women's affective responses to the shortage of marriageable males have been primarily sociological in nature, and thus do not create a clear picture of women's responses. However, several news stories, blogs, and popular magazines (Kaufman, 2014; Lucas, 2011; Penn, 2015; Tan, 2015; White, 2015) suggest that African American women have a myriad of reactions to this issue that have served to inform the construction of the measure (e.g., "Are White men the answer?" "It's so hard to find a 'good' Black man," "The more educated I become, the less likely I am to find a

mate”). Moreover, some African American women do not perceive a shortage of marriageable partners and may manage their dating and mate selection behavior accordingly. In other words, African American women’s emotional and attitudinal response to the shortage likely affects how they date (e.g., setting strict criteria for the type of man they date or choosing not to date at all), who they date (e.g., “settling” for a man with less education than them or one who is unemployed), and their decision-making strategies in sexual encounters (e.g., agreeing to not use a condom because the male does not want to do so).

To accomplish the goals of this study, I collected data to establish preliminary evidence of the new scale’s construct validity and internal consistency. The research includes measurement of participants’ attitudes and emotions about the dating process. The primary research goal is to determine whether the perception of the shortage of marriageable African American men is a single unitary construct, whether it is comprised of two separate but related constructs, or whether it is comprised of two separate, unrelated constructs. Due to the dearth of research on this topic, no existing literature discusses the presence or absence of two dimensions. Rather, I hypothesized their existence.

I hoped to establish construct validity by comparing the *Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage Scale* to items in the *Importance of Marriage Scale*, which was also created for the purposes of this study. To this end, I predicted that the full *Plausibility* scale, the affective subscale, and the attitudinal subscale will be positively correlated with the *Importance of Marriage* scale since those who view marriage as an important life goal, might also be more

aware of a shortage and therefore express stronger affect and attitudes about it. I also predicted that the full scale and both subscales would be positively correlated to items assessing women's attitudes regarding dating African American men.

To determine the existence of one or several constructs and to test the hypotheses, I tested the scale for internal consistency as indicated by a high Cronbach's alpha score. Modifications in the set of items were considered in order to maximize that index of reliability. I also conducted univariate and bivariate analyses of each of the scale items to determine relationships among them. To test the hypotheses and establish construct validity, I calculated and compared the Cronbach's alphas for the *Plausibility* full scale and subscales as well as for the *Importance of Marriage* scale. I also computed several correlations to test the hypothesis about women's attitudes regarding dating African American men.

Review of the Literature

Due to historical, sociocultural, and political influences, relationship formation within the African American community faces significant challenges and resistance. The legacy of disrupted households and severed familial and relational ties during slavery continues to impact heterosexual romantic relationships, mate selection, and marriage among African Americans (Pinderhughes, 2002). Although the slave trade is a thing of the past, its legacy and the impact of systemic racism and other widespread policy practices in the U.S. has contributed to several barriers today that instigate the epidemic of a shortage of African American men. These barriers include high incarceration rates, a significant prevalence of unemployment and underemployment, and increasing rates of interracial

dating/marriage (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995; Wilson, 1987; Wilson, 1996). These factors and the resultant smaller pool of “marriageable” men leaves African American women who desire to enter relationships, and perhaps start families of their own with African American men in a unique and difficult position (Wilson, 1987).

Throughout the past 50 years, marriage rates in the U.S. have slowly declined and new relational patterns have emerged as singles wait longer to marry or choose to cohabit rather than marry. For African American men and women alike, there has been a decline in marriage rates and a rise in age at first marriage (Wang & Parker, 2014). This change has been compounded by rises in divorce and separation rates as well as the number of female-headed households (Staples, 2007). Current estimates suggest that only about two-thirds of African American women will marry, and about three-fifths of African American children may never live in a married-couple family during their formative years (as compared to one-fifth of White children) (Bumpass & Lu, 2000; Goldstein & Kenney, 2001).

Since the mid 20th century, there has been an increasingly dwindling number of African American men available to date and marry African American women (Wolfers, Leonhardt, & Quealy, 2015). These men have recently been deemed as “missing,” largely because of early deaths or because they are incarcerated (Wolfers et al., 2015). Research on African Americans in the mass incarceration system reveals that African American men have been disproportionately shuttled into the criminal justice system, resulting in a significant scarcity in society (Alexander, 2012). In fact, African American women between the ages of 25 and 54 who are not in jail or prison outnumber African American men in that same category by 1.5 million (Wolfers et al., 2015). That is, for every 100 African American

women, there are only 83 available African American men. This number is compared to a 100:99 ratio for White women and men (Wolfers et al., 2015). The result is a situation in which African American women have few African American men from which to choose and many have to eventually resign themselves to remaining unmarried throughout their lives.

Despite this reality, desire to marry has not waned in the African American community. King's (1999) study of 317 African American women's attitudes toward marriage revealed that attitudes are mixed and vary according to demographic background (e.g., year of education, marital status, age, religious preference, and gender of the adults who raised participants). King (1999) notes that there appears to be a generation gap between older and younger African American women such that older women, who were raised with a higher priority on marriage than careers and were more educated and affluent, were more positive about the likelihood and benefits of marriage. In contrast, younger participants, who had not yet established economic stability and who may not have been raised to consider marriage as an ultimate success, had slightly more negative views of marriage. King (1999) also notes that younger women must contend with several factors relevant in today's generation, including the shrinking pool of "marriageable" men and an ever-increasing sex-ratio imbalance. Nevertheless, most women in the study expressed moderate to highly positive attitudes toward marriage. Moreover, the women who were highly educated and earned higher than average incomes were most interested in eventual marital unions (King, 1999).

In his research on dating and marriage patterns among professional African American women in their thirties and forties, Banks (2011) notes that despite this desire to

marry, college-educated African American women are the most likely women of all ethnic and racial backgrounds to either remain unmarried or to wed a less-educated man who earns less than they do. Since they are also the least likely to date interracially, all of the above factors contribute to African American women's status as the most unmarried group in the nation (Census, 2010; The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013).

African American Mate Selection: Theoretical Approaches

Several researchers have theorized about the factors involved in mate selection dynamics within the African American community, but very few have tested and applied theoretical concepts to this group. Although the evidence base for mating and dating processes is scant, several theoretical approaches have been applied to understanding mate selection in African Americans: social exchange theory, dyadic power thesis, mate availability theory, and the ABCX family crisis model (Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005; Hill, 1949; McCubbin & Patterson, 1993; Schoen, 1995; South & Lloyd, 1992; Taylor, 1998;). Social exchange theory is the most comprehensive, whereas dyadic power thesis and mate availability theory are specialized variations on social exchange theory. The family crisis model puts the lack of options in the marriage market in the context of a stressor that with which African American women must contend each day. These approaches were used to inform the present research. A brief synopsis of each approach and its application to African Americans is provided in the sections that follow.

Social exchange theory. Although researchers have posited several theories that could illuminate and explain African American women's difficulties in finding suitable African American male partners (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004; Buss & Barnes, 1986; Darwin,

1859; Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000), one that has consistently been applied (through social commentary and synopses) to explain this phenomenon, as well as other dating and mating strategies, is social exchange theory (Becker, 1973; Coontz, 2009; Sprecher, 1998). Developed in the mid-to-late 1950s by social psychologists George Homans and Richard Emerson, the main premise of Social Exchange Theory (SET) is that all human relationships are based on members' cost-benefit analysis and comparison of alternatives (Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958). In this framework, social relationships are cast in economic terms in which there are rewards and costs. Rewards within a relationship are defined as aspects that bring pleasure, satisfaction, or gratification (White, Klein, & Martin, 2015). These can take the form of tangible items (e.g., clothes, money, cars, homes) or symbolic, intangible items (e.g., affection, praise, recognition).

The magnitude of rewards experienced by a participant in a relationship is dependent upon the individual's perceptions, and thus is subjective. Therefore, two individuals might receive the same objective rewards from a partner (e.g., expressions of affection) but experience different degrees of reward because one perceives the partner's affectionate behavior as heartfelt but the other perceives the affection acts as insincere. In contrast, costs are defined as punishments or forfeited rewards as a result of social relationships (Chibucos, Leite, & Weis, 2005). Chibucos et al., (2005) identify three primary types of costs involved in social relationships. *Investment costs* include energy, mental, and emotional investments, *direct costs* include time and financial resources, and *opportunity costs* represent the potential rewards that could be lost due to involvement in any given relationship or social exchange (e.g., the several emotional and financial sacrifices that are

involved in raising children). Proponents of SET argue that human beings are essentially hedonistic beings who will act in their own interests when circumstances permit it. These assumptions apply to all family relationships whether it be between parents and children, between siblings, between spouses or other family members. It also applies to the processes that occur during dating and mate selection.

When selecting a mate or spouse, the process of mate selection and relationship formation is one in which people attempt to maximize rewarding social interactions by exchanging their own assets for equally desirable qualities in potential partners. Assets that individuals may bring to a relationship include educational achievement, physical attractiveness, dependability, kindness, social status, economic security, good health, faithfulness, patience, trustworthiness, adventurousness, and positive regard for the partner. In some cases, perceptions of rewards and costs vary according to gender. These assets may be considered valuable for men and women alike.

Social exchange theory holds that people choose to remain in relationships when they believe that there is an equitable exchange of assets. It holds then, that when a person perceives that the costs outweigh the perceived benefits he/she will end the relationship and begin pursuit of a more equitable union in which the new partner more closely matches what he/she has to offer. Therefore, in order to make a relationship socially beneficial and equitable, each partner needs to bring to the relationship qualities that both individuals find worthwhile.

Application of social exchange theory to the African American marriage market. Several theorists have attempted to explain the decline in marital patterns within

the African American community by utilizing the concepts of social exchange theory. However, critical reviews of these studies have illuminated several flaws of this framework when applied to this population (Becker, 1973, 1981; Schoen 1995; Taylor, 1998). First, African American women have been immersed in the labor force for much longer than women of other ethnicities, often out of economic necessity (Collins, 1999, 2000; Davis, 1983). The view of marriage as a business transaction in which women trade their domestic abilities and beauty for men's financial security simply does not align with the historical African American family structure (Wallace, 2014). African American women have consistently been a major source of financial support and security in African American households (Spaights & Whitaker, 1995; St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). Moreover, their contributions have often equaled or exceeded contributions of their spouses due to higher education rates compared with their male partners (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014; White, 2015).

Consequently, African American women do not bring the same set of assets to the mate selection market as do their White American counterparts. Furthermore, they do not select mates under similar circumstances (Wallace, 2014). Specifically, African American women have recognized that not only is there a restricted number of men in their dating pool, but that not all of the men who are in that pool are able to offer the traditional male benefits of marriage (i.e., status, security, financial stability) (Dixon, 2009). As a result, many have learned to look for other appealing qualities in African American males (Ross, 1997). Consequently, African Americans may have different expectations for their relationships than White Americans. African American women may lower their

expectations based on these contextual realities. Though SET has components that certainly apply to African American mate selection dynamics, the Dyadic Power Thesis and Mate Availability Theory are micro theories that supplement SET in ways that seem better to illuminate the contextual factors shaping mate selection among African American heterosexual adults.

Dyadic Power Thesis. The Dyadic Power Thesis (Rollins & Bahr, 1976) focuses on the role of gender-based power dynamics in the African American heterosexual mate selection market. Derived from SET it notes that the impact of the imbalanced male to female ratios in a given community on mating and dating can influence women's ability to locate and sustain satisfactory romantic partnerships. Building on the principles of Social Exchange Theory, the Dyadic Power Thesis also assumes that individuals ultimately desire to maximize their rewards and limit their costs within a market-like system. However, it also posits that the gender that is in the numerical minority has dyadic power in heterosexual relationships because of the gender's scarcity (Uecker & Regnerus, 2010).

Although relationship markets can be operationalized in several ways, including neighborhoods, communities, cities, regions, or nationally, the search for a partner is typically limited by space, geography, demographic background, culture, and structural power (e.g., economic, political, and legal power) (Guttentag & Secord, 1983). Since individuals in a market are interrelated and affected by supply and demand within markets, dyadic power is influenced by both intra-relationship factors and market characteristics (Uecker & Regnerus, 2010). When the market sex ratio is imbalanced, the minority gender, that is the gender occurring less frequently in a given community,

acquires more power. This condition provides the opportunity for the minority gender to maximize rewards with limited costs, due to the surplus of mate options. There is also a structural component of the dyadic power thesis, which stipulates that whichever gender has more structural power in relationships. Structural power affords more economic and political power and status to the minority gender. Since men are typically in the minority, they can use that power to establish relational norms that maximize their rewards (Guttentag & Secord, 1983; Uecker & Regnerus, 2010). Men who have structural power can use it to create gender roles that limit the freedom of women; when women hold the power, they use it to negotiate terms that ensure that men treat them well.

Most relevant to the African American mate selection market is the reality that an imbalanced sex ratio favoring men gives men structural and dyadic power. African American men with highly desirable assets (e.g., highly educated, employed, physically attractive) are “hot commodities” on the heterosexual mate selection market. African American women, even highly desirable ones, have less bargaining power because there is a large supply of them in the market. This imbalance may also result in a reversion to “traditional” gender roles and sexual permissiveness among women because of the little to no power they have to demand relational commitment (Guttentag & Secord, 1983; Uecker & Regnerus, 2010). Under these circumstances, men are able to exercise more control over the resources of relationships (e.g., time, companionship, affection, sex) while investing less effort. Because the dyadic power thesis considers the impact of imbalanced sex ratios and the resultant negative effects when women are in the numerical minority, it likely helps explain the distinct mating and dating dilemmas encountered by African American females.

Furthermore, these dynamics may contribute to a psychological perception of a shortage of “marriageable” African American men. It is posited that the shortage may predict dating decisions and sexual decision-making within this population.

Mate Availability Theory. Mate Availability Theory is another variation on SET that is highly applicable to African American heterosexual romantic relationships. Also known as the sex-ratio theory (Guttentag & Secord, 1983), this theory posits that mate selection is directly correlated with the male to female ratio in the dating market. The sex ratio for a given population is reported in terms of the number of men per 100 women. That is, if the ratio were 120 (i.e., a “high” sex ratio), there would be 120 men for every 100 women. Conversely, if the ratio were 85 (i.e., a “low” sex ratio), there would be 85 men for every 100 women. In populations that have a high sex ratio, females are more highly valued either as beautiful and glamorous single ladies or as loving and devoted wives and mothers (Guttentag & Secord, 1983). In those in which there is a low sex ratio, the oversupply of women often leads to social, cultural, and economic trends that are the opposite of when the sex ratio is high. Women appear and likely feel relatively powerless and are more likely to be valued as sex objects (Guttentag & Secord, 1983). In addition, more men and women remain single, the number of nonmarital births rise, the number of female-headed households increases, the divorce rate is high, the remarriage rate is high for men, and women find it very difficult to establish economic mobility within marriage (Guttentag & Secord, 1983).

In their analysis of Census data between 1940 and 1970, Guttentag and Secord (1983) reported that a shortage of African American men has been a persistent problem

over several decades. They attribute the shortages during this period to a variety of occurrences that contribute to the overall number of African American men in the population. First, structural differences in the sex ratio of African Americans relative to White Americans emerge early in the life course due to higher rates of male fetal loss and infant mortality in African American males. This difference is further exacerbated by higher rates of premature death. Additionally, Guttentag and Secord (1983) observed higher rates of African American men serving in the armed forces overseas, effectively removing them from the mate selection pool in the U.S.

Finally, one must consider gender differences in rates of interracial marriage in the African American community (Wang, 2015). African American men are two to three times more likely to date interracially than African American women (Wang & Parker, 2014). In fact, African American women are the least likely to marry someone of another race than all other women, making the shortage particularly profound for those who are upwardly mobile and college-educated (Wang & Parker, 2014). The researchers argued that the resultant decrease in the number of marital opportunities available for African American women would result in the following (Guttentag & Secord, 1983):

[African American] men would be reluctant to make long-term marital commitment to one woman throughout her childbearing years; [African American] men would be reluctant to marry and invest in parenthood; [African American] men would have a number of women sequentially or simultaneously; sexual libertarianism would be the ethos, and illegitimate births would be more common; brief sexual liaisons with [African American] men would be frequent; [African American] male attitudes

would be misogynistic; women would not be highly valued or respected; sex roles would be less differentiated; and [African American] women would seek and possibly achieve economic, sexual and social independence for themselves, rather than acquiring economic or social status through marriage. [African American] women in these circumstances would be aware of the low value placed on them by [African American] men. Their unhappiness would be reflected in higher rates of depression [...]. (p. 215)

The researchers note that these patterns do not derive from biological characteristics inherent in being African American. Rather, they are the social consequences borne out of extremely low sex ratios and institutionalized oppression that results in fewer opportunities for education and lower incomes (Guttentag & Secord, 1983). As predicted, many African American women have experienced the effects of this low sex ratio, which has resulted in what is called a “marriage squeeze.” That is, the ratio imbalance and subsequent squeeze leaves African American women who prefer to date African American men at a disadvantage because the latter have significantly more bargaining power. African American women view “marriageable” African American men (i.e., those who are gainfully employed and economically stable) as a commodity (Wilson, 1987). Knowing this, African American men who meet this criterion have more choices in regard to mate selection and relationship commitment. Since researchers often acknowledge mate availability as one of the leading causes in the declining marriage rates among African Americans, the sex ratio theory is perhaps the most applicable to this particular community.

Although social exchange theory, dyadic power thesis, and mate availability theory are important to understanding the dating and mate selection context, very few researchers have explored these theories in terms of the African American mate selection process. Limited but existing evidence suggests that many African American women are aware of the smaller numbers of men who can offer similar rewards in return for the costs involved in a relationship (Dixon, 2009; Ferguson, 2006; Hall, 2014; Porter & Bronzaft, 1995). However, a significant gap in the literature is the perceptions that these women have about there being a severe shortage of eligible men in their marriage market, as well as the resultant effects on their choices of dating and mating partners. It is this phenomenon that this thesis attempted to uncover.

“Marriageable” African American Men and Heterosexual Mate Selection in African American Couples

The term “marriageable men” was coined by William Julius Wilson (1987) in an attempt to delineate the relationship between male employment status and family life and married life. To this end, Wilson used census data based on a national sample to create the “male marriageable pool index,” defined as the ratio between the rates of employed men to women of the same race and age group (Wilson, 1987). That is, the index considers men who are employed as “marriageable” and those who are not as “unmarriageable.” A male’s employment status, then, serves as a proxy for his ability to support a family. Because of the sharp decline in nonwhite ratios beginning in the 1960s and the continual decline for African Americans specifically relative to White men, Wilson (1987) concluded that his index reveals a long-term decline in the proportion of “marriageable” African American

men who are economically able to support a family. The decline resulted in decreased attractiveness of non-college-educated men in the marriage market, and spurred the decrease in marriage rates among the less well educated (Cherlin, 2005). This shortage of marriageable men is one of the most significant structural barriers to marriage for African American women (Wilson, 1987). The shortage of marriageable men is the result of a combination of social, structural, historical, and political forces (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995). They include exclusion from and/or marginalization from the workforce through reduction in manufacturing jobs (Wilson, 1996), mass incarceration rates (Dixon, 2009; Wilson, 1987), and negative racial stereotypes that undermine perceptions of African American men with potential employers (Dixon, 2009),

In her analysis of the various factors that play a role in African Americans' status as the ethnic group least likely to marry, Dixon (2009) revealed structural, cultural, and individual factors that contribute to the phenomenon. Structural factors are typically economic and demographic in nature and include imbalanced sex ratios between African American men and women, high incarceration rates for African American men (e.g., although African American men comprise 6% of the overall population, they represent 50% of the prison population), and the exclusion and marginalization of African American men from the labor force (Dixon, 2009; Wilson, 1996).

Research reveals that exorbitantly high incarceration rates significantly constrict the marriage market, particularly for poor and working-class African American women (Wilson, 1986). Punitive policies for drug offenses since the 1980s have resulted in the mass incarceration of young African American men. This is compounded by socioeconomic

status, since it is the men from poor urban areas that typically fill prisons. When men are imprisoned, marriages and relationships tend to dissolve. And even when they are eventually released, African American men's prospects for marriage remain bleak. These men are often not appealing to successful, college-educated, upwardly mobile African American women (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995). The stigma, combined with the reality that securing a financially stable job is significantly lower with a prison record both contribute to the unlikelihood of marriage.

African American men's inability to secure stable employment is another major structural factor that negatively influences relationships and marriageability in the African American community. Employers often maintain negative schemas of these men as lazy, undependable, unreliable, and dishonest. This reality, compounded by other institutionalized systems of oppression, results in continuous patterns of unemployment, underemployment, and sporadic employment (Dixon, 2009).

Cultural factors include social movements (e.g., the sexual revolution, the feminist movement, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender movements), resulting in an increase in the number of couples who choose to cohabitate prior to and/or instead of marrying, and the existence of extended family networks that may serve in lieu of the support of a marriage partner (Dixon, 2009). Yet another significant social factor consists of very low interracial marriage rates among African American women. Since African American men are between two to three times as likely to marry interracially as African American women, the pool of eligible men for African American women is significantly diminished (Wang, 2015). This imbalance affects professional African American women in

particular since the mates that offer assets most closely aligned with their own (i.e., African American men) are also the most likely to marry someone of a different race. This gender gap in interracial marriage is widest among the African American middle class, making this a particular salient phenomenon for upwardly mobile, college-educated African American women (Banks, 2011; Wang & Parker, 2014).

Individual factors that impact marriage rates among African Americans include the desire to marry, characteristics that partners seek in potential mates, and willingness to commit to a relationship (Dixon, 2009). Another significant influence on dating and mating patterns in the community is the large gap in academic and professional achievement between African American men and women (Burton & Tucker, 2009). That is, as the economic prospects for African American women continue to improve, they steadily decline for African American men, leading to ever-higher rates of unemployment, underemployment, and unstable work (Wilson, 1987). Since about 69% of African American women earn college degrees as compared to only 57% of African American men, it is evident that the former outpace the latter in educational attainment (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014). As a result, African American women are often first in line for professional opportunities requiring advanced education (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014). Although women still earn less than men, that gap is quickly narrowing. This success gap has contributed to the relationship gulf between African American men and women, as women find less educated and less successful men undesirable, whereas men indicate little interest in establishing long-term relationships without their own ability to provide economically.

Summary of findings. Because of high incarceration rates, unstable employment, high rates of intermarriage for African American men (particularly those in the small group of African American men who are college-educated and successful), and the ever-widening success gap between African American men and women, African American women are faced with a dilemma in which options are few. It remains the norm that a man should provide a steady income and make a substantial, stable contribution to family finances to be viewed as a stable prospect for marriage (Cherlin, 2005). As job opportunities for young African American men without college degrees have significantly declined, so has their attractiveness in the labor market (Cherlin, 2005). The resultant general pattern is that women either “marry down” or choose not to date or marry at all.

Historically, it has been expected that women “marry up” by entering unions with men who increase their social status, provide financial stability, and offer economic resources and benefits. This practice is known as hypergamy. In contrast, hypogamy occurs when a person “marries down.” This term is usually applied in situations in which men marry women who provide the finances and resources that can increase social status and stability. Within the African American community, the latter is much more common than the former. More specifically, African American women are more likely than Whites to enter into marital unions that are less homogamous in regard to age, education, and marital history, that is, if they ever marry at all (Spanier & Glick, 1980). Although many women desire a long-term relationship, because of the male shortage, the success gap, and other structural, historical, and sociocultural factors that limit the pool of educated, successful African American men, college-educated African American women are more likely than

college-educated women in any other group to remain unmarried (U.S. Census, 2010; The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013).

Consequences of the Male Shortage on African American Females' Mating and Dating Practices

The low sex ratio and subsequent imbalance of power between African American men and women in the mate selection market set the stage for emotionally, psychologically, and physically unhealthy romantic relationships among some African American heterosexual couples (Ferguson et al., 2006). The power differential gives African American men several options from which to choose in the dating arena. Some men use this reality to their advantage by establishing intimate relationships that are not committed or monogamous. These relationships include the benefits of sex and emotional caretaking without marriage or other concomitant responsibilities. Faced with the reality of the imbalance of power, African American women who desire romantic companionship often settle for less desirable partners, yield relationship and sexual power, tolerate behaviors such as infidelity, and have unprotected sex because they feel less able to demand condom use (Hall et al., 2014). Attempting to resist unfavorable and/or unsafe dating practices (e.g., refusal to use condoms) is often viewed as futile in the face of an African American man's message that whatever one woman is unwilling to do, another woman will. Desire to maintain a partner, at any cost, is often the driving factor behind African American women's choice to remain in relationships that are, in many ways, detrimental. In contrast, some women resign themselves to the belief that there are no suitable men available and choose to opt out of the mating and dating process altogether.

Concurrent sexual relationships in African American partnerships. Another consequence of the shortage of marriageable African American men is a relatively high number of concurrent sexual relationships in comparison to other groups (Adimora, Schoenbach, & Doherty, 2007). Concurrent sexual partnerships are defined as an individual's involvement in sexual relationships with more than one person that overlap in time (Adimora et al., 2007). They may be contrasted to serial or sequential sexual partnerships, in which an individual engages in a sexual relationship with only one person, with no overlap in time between subsequent partners (Mah & Halperin, 2010).

Since African American men are much more likely to engage in concurrent sexual partnerships than women, African American women are often left knowing that they are "sharing" their significant other with one or more women (Adimora, Schoenbach, Taylor, Khan, & Schwartz, 2011). This concept of "man-sharing," or concurrent sexual partnership, has served to create a unique set of rules and implicit understanding about dating wherein African American women resign themselves to the fact that it is unlikely that they are the only woman in their partner's life (Hall, Lee, & Witherspoon, 2014). The pervasiveness of man-sharing makes it difficult for both African American men and women to sustain committed relationships with anyone. Because of the sex-ratio imbalance within the community that leaves a surplus of African American women and a deficit of African American men, the latter often choose to either remain single and "play the field" or engage in multiple concurrent long-term relationships (Aborampah, 1989; Staples, 1978). As men perceive their options are relatively limitless, their expectations and standards for a spouse continue to rise and create a sense of entitlement. This breeds resentment among African

American women as their own expectations of African American men's behavior and fidelity diminish.

Consequences of concurrent sexual relationships. The practice of concurrent sexual partnership bears several negative repercussions for African American men and women alike. For one, it generates suspicion on both sides. Men become cynical towards establishing committed relationships because of the abundance of options, and women become cynical and wary of how many other females may also be involved with their significant other. Secondly, the practice exposes African American women to a wide range of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) if they are not careful to have protected sex with their partners. Compared to all other races and ethnicities, African Americans account for the highest proportion of new HIV infections, those living with HIV, and those ever diagnosed with AIDS (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2015). The Center for Disease Control estimates that African Americans account for nearly half of all new infections of HIV each year (44%) (CDC, 2015). Among African Americans, 70 percent of all new infections occur in men, while 30 percent are in women. Gay and bisexual African American men are the most affected by the disease, and are closely followed by heterosexual African American women, who often engage in sexual intercourse with men who have concurrent sexual partners of which the women are unaware. Among African American women, heterosexual contact is the most frequently cited mode of HIV transmission (CDC, 2014).

Reports on the rates of genital herpes among various groups in the United States reveal that one in six Americans are infected with the disease; in addition, the group most

affected by the disease is African American women, with a prevalence rate of 48 percent (CDC, 2013). This high rate of infection is not due to African American females having sex with multiple partners. Rather, it is the result of the concurrent relationships held by Black men in which safe sex is usually not a routine practice. By having unprotected sex with several women in any given period of time, the spread of disease is virtually inevitable, leaving African American women saddled with potential serious health risks.

In their qualitative research study, Ferguson et al. (2006) examined the sex ratio imbalance and its relationship to HIV infection among African American women at a historically black college. They conducted focus group interviews with 31 students from two colleges; of that number, four students were male. The researchers found that the sex ratio imbalance on these campuses resulted in both man-sharing and women being more compliant with men's condom use preferences (Ferguson et al., 2006). As a result, women were at increased risk for HIV infection. Low self-esteem and a perceived lack of power in influencing condom use compromised women's own ability to communicate their desire to use condoms (Ferguson et al., 2006). In fact, participants suggested that this low self-esteem and compliance with men's request to not use condoms was associated with the desire to have a male partner regardless of the consequences (Ferguson et al., 2006).

Sexual decision-making and sexual power within African American relationships. A sex ratio imbalance can significantly affect individuals' sexual decision-making processes and the overt and covert wielding of sexual power in couple relationships. In their study, Ferguson et al., (2006) explored the experiences of African American women at historically black colleges that maintained a significant gender ratio

imbalance. In regard to condom use, the researchers found that students suggested that males and females made differing inferences about a partner's suggestion to use this form of protection. That is, when females suggested using a condom, males commonly associated the request with the female having an STI. Conversely, females interpreted males' suggestion to use a condom as an indication of his desire to keep her safe and therefore symbolic of his caring for her. The women in Ferguson et al.'s (2006) study were acutely aware of the practice and pervasiveness of man-sharing. In response to it, they chose to accept its occurrence, dated men who did not attend their university, or decided not to date at all. Whatever they chose, they accepted that this decision was borne out of a sense of helplessness to change the pattern of man-sharing, particularly within a campus community.

In their mixed-methods study, Hall, Lee, and Witherspoon (2014) examined the impact of mate availability and type of relationship involvement on dating experiences and their association to sexual decision-making and behavior among heterosexual African American men and women at a historically black college. Using a combination of quantitative methods and focus groups, they assessed the experiences of 57 African American undergraduate students and elicited results that substantiate the prevalence of concurrent partnerships and the negative effects of the sex-ratio imbalance in the African American community. The majority of the men in the study agreed that having a "main girl" but being involved simultaneously with others is a common practice for them and in their social groups (Hall et al., 2014). The female participants agreed that this is a common

practice and note that this reality often influences them to make sexually risky decisions or to decrease their activity in the dating market.

Interracial relationships among African Americans. Many scholars have noted that perhaps an obvious solution to the shortage of educated, successful African American men is for African American women to date interracially. This topic has received scant attention in the research literature. Although the rates of interracial marriage have continued to increase over the years, it continues to remain relatively low for African Americans. Of the 3.6 million Americans who married in 2013, 58% of American Indians, 28% of Asians, 19% of African Americans and 7% of whites married someone of a different race (Wang, 2015). Within the 19% of African Americans who married interracially in 2013, there was a significant gender gap, in that twice as many African American men than African American women chose to marry interracially (Wang, 2015).

The statistics suggest that many African American women aim to marry intraracially. Though there is a paucity of studies that explore the factors involved in African American women's desire to date and marry African American men, Porter and Bronzaft (1995) attempted to delineate the phenomenon. In their qualitative study, Porter and Bronzaft (1995) found that African American women overwhelmingly reported a desire for African American men as both dating and marriage partners. In their study of 70 African American female college students, they discovered that African American women find dating experiences with African American men more fulfilling and rewarding because they were easier to talk to and more supportive of their life dreams and goals than men of other races. Nevertheless, these women remained aware of the pervasiveness of man-

sharing. Fewer than half of them believed that African American men were trustworthy relationship partners, and only half of them believed that these men were willing to commit to a permanent relationship (i.e., marriage) (Porter & Bronzaft, 1995).

It seems then that despite drastic sex ratio imbalances, African American women outmarry less than any other group. Furthermore, they often do not see outmarriage as an option for a variety of reasons. Some women view dating an African American man as an important contributor to their sense of racial identity, others think that men of other races cannot relate to African American experiences, and still others are influenced by negative comments from family members and friends about the choice to date outside of their race. The same is true for dating within the African American community. In their longitudinal study of interracial and interethnic dating practices at a large university, Levin, Taylor, and Caudle (2007) found that intergroup dating on campuses was linked to ingroup identification levels such that high ingroup identification led to lower levels of intergroup dating. That is, the more African Americans identify with African American culture and people, the less likely it is that they will date someone of a different race. This is particularly true for African American females.

So, despite the psychological, emotional, and physical risks that are often associated with dating African American men, African American women remain committed to seeking romantic unions with them. However, because of the sex-ratio and subsequent power imbalance, African American women often feel obligated to settle for uncommitted sexual interactions with men. This is particularly true on college campuses. In fact, on college campuses, men and women of all races and ethnicities have begun to establish guidelines

for sexual behaviors that are different from those in the past. Several researchers have studied the sexual relationship patterns of college students in recent years as it becomes increasingly evident that college men and women are creating new rules for romantic involvement, such as hooking up and man-sharing.

Within this backdrop, it is critically important to ascertain the existence of a perception of a shortage and whether that influences relationship decision-making. The aim of this study is to establish preliminary validation of a measure assessing the extent to which African American women believe there is a shortage of marriageable African American men by exploring their cognitions and emotions about the phenomenon. If the measure is proven valid and internally reliable, it could provide a foundation for exploring African American women's attitudes and emotions in response to the shortage of men in the dating market.

Hypotheses:

1. It was expected that the *Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage Scale* would display internal consistency. Exploratory analyses were conducted to determine whether subconstructs existed for attitudes and affect related to the plausibility of marrying African American men.
2. It was predicted that the full scale, attitudinal scale, and affective scale would be correlated with women's attitudes about the importance of marriage.
3. It was expected that the full scale, attitude scale, and affect scale would be correlated with women's attitudes regarding dating African American men.

4. It was predicted that women who preferred to date or marry African American men would also report more negative attitudes and emotions regarding the availability of “marriageable” African American men.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 251 heterosexual, unmarried women who identified as African American and who were 18 years of age or older at the time of the study. The mean age for the sample participants was 25.77 years. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 64 years (see Table 1). A generational breakdown of ages is as follows: 81.7% between ages 18 – 29, 8.4% between ages 30 – 39, 8.4% between ages 40 – 49, and 4% between ages 50 – 64. A total of 196 participants (78%) identified as Black/African American. The number of participants who identified with other ethnic groups were fairly small. They were as follows: 8.4% Afro-Caribbean, 6.4% biracial, 6% African, .8% Other, and .4% Black Central American (see Table 1). However, all participants indicated that they have at least one parent who is Black or has some Black heritage. Most participants resided in Maryland, but several states around the country were represented (e.g., North Carolina, Delaware, Colorado), as were a few international locations. A total of 226 participants (90%) were born and raised in the United States.

The average level of education completed by the sample participants was a bachelor’s degree. Of the participants, 33.9% of women had completed some college, 26.3% held a bachelor’s degree, 19.1% held a master’s degree, 10.8% had completed some graduate school, 7.6% held an associate’s degree, 1.6% held a professional degree, and .8%

held a doctorate degree (see Table 1). An eligibility requirement for participation in the survey was that participants have an education level of at least some college or more. A wide range of annual household incomes were reported by participants, with \$40 - 49,000 being the most common.

The vast majority of the women (96%) were single and never married. None of the participants were widowed, although 2% were engaged and 2% were divorced. Divorced women were included in the final sample despite the potential for different views of relationships than never-married women because they could still be actively involved in the dating market and provide feedback about the conditions of the dating pool. A total of 44.2% of participants indicated that their parents are currently married to each other. Another 25.5% reported that their parents were divorced, and 19.9% indicated that their parents never married.

Of the 251 participants, 220 reported their current relationship status. A total of 102 participants (40.6%) indicated that they were single and not dating; 58 participants (23.1%) indicated that they were dating, but not committed to one person; 54 participants (21.5%) were in an exclusive relationship with one person, and six participants (2.4%) were engaged (see Table 1).

Research Measures

A copy of the full survey can be found in Appendix A. It is important to note that only the measures that are germane to the thesis are included in this section. The full survey has a range of other measures that will be used in future research.

Ethnicity. Participants were given a range of options to indicate their ethnicity in the screener prior to receiving access to the full survey. There were six ethnicity options in the screener, which consisted of the following: *Black/African American (non-Hispanic)*, *Caucasian (non-Hispanic)*, *Latino American (any subgroup)*, *Asian (any subgroup)*, *Biracial or multiracial*, or *Other racial/ethnic background*. Participants who indicated either *Biracial or multiracial* or *Other racial/ethnic background* were asked to specify their ethnicity. If participants selected that they were of mixed heritage, they were asked if at least one of their parents identifies as Black or is of African descent. Only participants who indicated *Black/African American (Non-Hispanic)* or indicated that they had at least one African American parent were permitted access to the survey and were included in the final sample.

If participants were permitted access to the survey, they were asked to indicate their ethnicity again and were this time presented with a wider range of options to allow me to identify their specific racial/ethnic identity. These options included the following: *Black/African American (non-Hispanic)*, *Black Central American*, *Afro-Caribbean*, *African*, *Black South American*, *Biracial or multiracial*, or *Other racial/ethnic background*. Participants who indicated the latter two options were provided a write-in option to specify their specific racial/ethnic background.

Geographic location. Participants were asked to indicate the city and state in which they currently live. This question was open-ended to allow participants to write in their answers. They were also asked to indicate whether they were born and raised in the United States. If they chose no, they were asked to write in the country in which they have spent

the majority of their lives. This demographic variable is important to the survey results because mate options and availability vary significantly across regions within the United States. I used this information to more precisely describe characteristics of the sample.

Level of education. Participants were asked to indicate the highest level of education that they have completed. The options ranged from 1 - 12 and included the following: *Grade school; Junior high; Some high school; High school graduate or equivalent (e.g., GED); Diploma or certificate from vocational, technical, trade, or business school; Some college; Associate degree; Bachelor's degree; Some graduate school; Master's degree; Professional school degree (e.g., M.D., D.D.S., D.V.M., L.L.B., J.D.); and Doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D.)*. Although participants of all education levels were permitted to complete the survey, only those who indicated "Some college" or above were included in the final sample.

Household income. Participants were asked to indicate their annual household income with options ranging from 1 - *Below \$5000* to 22 - *\$200,000 or higher* in \$10,000 increments.

Parents' marital status. Participants were asked to indicate their parents' current marital status. Response options included "1" - *Never married*, '2' - *Married*, '3' - *Divorced*, '4' - *Separated*, '5' - *Widowed*, and '99' - *Don't know*. This researcher intended to note any correlations between participants' perceptions of the shortage of partners and participants' parental marital status.

Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage Scale. A total of 22 items were created to measure attitudinal and affective aspects of the perception of a shortage of marriageable

African American men among African American women (see Appendix B). Sample items included the following: (1) “Black women worry too much about getting married”; (2) “There are too many Black women and not enough Black men for me to find a lifelong partner”; (3) “I will be relieved if I get engaged/married”; and (4) “I fear I will never marry.” Two items were drawn from a previous scale measuring a similar construct developed by Wallace (2014) titled the Dating, Marriage, and Mate Selection Questionnaire: “Professional black women outnumber professional black men” and “Eligible black women outnumber eligible black men.” Responses ranged from “1” for *Strongly Disagree* to “5” for *Strongly Agree*. The following items were recoded during the data analysis process: “I am excited about my chances of finding a good black man to marry;” “I am happy with the number of good black men available for me to date;” and “There are enough black men available for me to find someone and form a lasting relationship.” These items are reverse coded. A sum of all items should be used in to calculate the score upon dissemination of the scale in the future. Respondents with higher scores should be viewed as having stronger negative perceptions and emotions about the plausibility of marriage to African American men. A full list of the original items generated for the scale validation is located in Appendix B.

Attitudes about the importance of marriage. Participants responded to 11 items created for this study that assessed the importance of marriage to them. Response options ranged from “1” for *Strongly Disagree* to “5” for *Strongly Agree*. Sample items included the following: “I would like to get married at some point in my lifetime,” “I would rather live with my partner than get married,” “Marriage is more important to me than accomplishing

my education/career goals.” A total of 11 items were summed to create a scale assessing the importance of marriage to the respondents’ life goals in general. A review of the items assessing the importance of marriage indicated that nine items were most relevant and that appeared to assess a single construct. Two items were not included because they differed from the retained items in focus. They were: “Black women worry too much about getting married;” and “It is not important for me to find a black man to marry.” The first item was removed because it was already present in the full *Plausibility* scale. The latter was removed because it focused on desire to marry a black man, specifically. The Cronbach’s alpha for the *Importance of Marriage* scale was .76. A full list of the final scale items can be found in Appendix I.

The following items were reverse-coded during the data analysis process: “I would rather live with my partner than get married;” “I feel whole without a relationship with a man;” “Marriage is not essential to a happy life;” and “My education/career goals are more important than marriage.” A full list of the original items generated for this scale can be found in Appendix C.

Dating status. In the survey, relationship status was assessed with one item: “What is your relationship status?” Responses were as follows: “1” for *Single and not dating*; “2” for *Dating but not committed to one person*; “3” for *In an exclusive relationship with one person*; and “4” for *Engaged*.

Attitudes about dating African American men. Participants’ attitudes about dating African American men was assessed with two items: “Black men have the upper

hand over black women in the dating world;” and “Black men take Black women for granted.” Response options ranged from “1” for *Strongly Disagree* to ‘5’ for *Strongly Agree*.

Attitudes about interracial dating and marriage. Four survey items assessed participants’ openness to and attitudes about interracial dating and marriage. They included the following: “I am open to marrying a man of a different ethnic or racial background.” “I only date men of a similar ethnic or racial background;” and, “It is important to me to marry someone of my own race.” Response options ranged from “1” for *Strongly Disagree* to ‘5’ for *Strongly Agree*.

Procedure

Recruitment. All recruitment and enrollment procedures were approved by the campus Institutional Review Board prior to the survey launch. Multiple strategies were used to recruit participants for the study. The research team sent personalized notifications and advertisements about the study via their personal Facebook pages, the study Facebook page, and email blasts to people with members of personal and professional networks. Sample wording from the social media advertisements is as follows:

Hi everyone! As many of you know, I am conducting a research study on Black women's attitudes about marriage and their marriage/dating prospects. If you are a Black woman (or know Black women), please, please, please check out and complete the survey. You can find more information (and FAQs) about the survey at go.umd.edu/livingsinglefacebook. Otherwise, check out the study flyer (below) for more information or MESSAGE ME

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DIRECTLY with questions! Please feel free to share this status or copy and paste it to get the word out. Thanks for all of your help, everyone!

Email notifications contained the IRB-approved email text. Some social media posts only contained the flyer. Each of the emails sent on behalf of the study included the flyer as an attachment (see Appendix D).

Individuals who received advertisements about the study were either eligible to complete the survey or knew of people who might be eligible. All recipients were encouraged to pass the link along to unmarried, college-educated African American women in their own personal networks. Advertisements contained a web link to a screener for the survey.

The researcher also sent the IRB-approved informational email about the survey as well as the study flyer to various academic departments, organization leaders, and listservs affiliated with two universities within a major metropolitan area located within the Mid-Atlantic region. One of those universities is predominantly white, while the other is historically black. The study email and flyer was successfully posted through several campus listservs that targeted a wide range of students. The email was sent to various student organizations in which African American graduate and undergraduate students typically participate, as well as to several departments in the university setting that might have access to a greater proportion of women who met the study eligibility criteria. The research team also utilized Facebook networks and posted a description of the survey and the flyer on various public pages that cater to an African American audience.

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All study solicitations contained a brief introduction from the principal investigator as well as the IRB-approved cover letter and survey flyer. The research team posted flyers about the study throughout the college campus and provided flyers to colleagues who could post them in their respective offices and communities. A full list of the departments and organizations that the email and flyer were sent to can be found in Appendix E.

Flyers were also posted in business establishments in a metropolitan area located within the Mid-Atlantic region as well as in areas with a high number of African American patrons. Each day, the study Facebook page was populated with reminders that encouraged the audience to take and share the survey. The research team also regularly responded to emails from potential participants who sought to learn more about and gain access to the survey. The team replied with links to the survey Facebook page and the survey screener. The study flyer was also attached to the emails. Finally, the research team had a phone script available to be used for any participants who sought to talk more about the study over the phone. No participants expressed interest in doing so.

Enrollment and Survey Completion. This project relied upon two strategies for data collection. The first was administration of the survey online via the Qualtrics platform. The second was administration of the survey to participants in hard copy form in a conference room located in the Department of Family Science. Participants who did not wish to complete the survey online were to be scheduled for an appointment to complete a hard copy of the survey with a trained research assistant to complete the survey. Two undergraduate and one graduate research assistant were trained to screen potential

participants by Dr. Smith Bynum or me. Each assistant was required to show proof of CITI training.

Screening questions. Prior to beginning the survey, participants answered a number of screening questions to determine their eligibility to participate in the survey (see Appendix F).

Data collection online via Qualtrics. The research assistants, Dr. Smith Bynum, and I distributed the survey link online to individuals in our social networks who fit the eligibility criteria. Prospective participants were given access to an anonymous online survey link. Upon clicking on the anonymous link, participants were shown several screening questions to verify their eligibility for the study. If they met the criteria, (i.e., African American, heterosexual, single), they were redirected to another screen that contained an electronic consent form.

Participants viewed and completed the Consent Form electronically via Qualtrics. On the final screen of the consent form, prospective participants were informed that by clicking the “Next” button, they were providing their consent to participate in the study and would be redirected to the beginning of the survey on the next screen. If participants chose not to participate in the study, they could refrain from clicking the “Next” button and close out the screen instead.

On average, the questionnaire took about 10 minutes for participants to complete. Once they submitted the survey, they viewed a new screen with a message thanking them for their participation. It also inquired about their willingness to be entered into a raffle for one of two \$50 electronic gift cards to Amazon, Google Play, or iTunes. Participants who

responded affirmatively were redirected to a new survey that was disconnected from their survey answers. In this new screen, participants were asked to enter their name, email address, and telephone number so that they may be contacted if they are selected as a raffle winner. Once they entered this information, participants were shown a new final screen that thanked them for their participation. It also contained the anonymous survey link and encouraged participants to pass it along to women in their personal networks or friends or family members who fit the study criteria. Since participants were not required to enter their name or any identifying information in any part of the survey, the entire process remained anonymous. Data collected for the raffle was in no way connected to a participant's survey answers.

In-person data collection. Participants were also given the option to contact the research team to set up a time to complete a paper version of the survey in the Department of Family Science in the presence of a trained research assistant. Research assistants were trained to screen the person right away via a 1-page questionnaire containing questions that assess the enrollment criteria. The research assistant would then inspect the screening questionnaire to verify eligibility. If participants met the criteria, they would receive two copies of the consent form and a hard copy of the survey in an envelope. Trained research assistants would review the consent form with participants. If the participants agreed to enroll, they would be asked to sign the form and initial it in designated places. They would also be informed that the second copy is to keep for their records.

The research assistants would instruct the participants to place the survey into a large brown envelope, seal it, and to give it and one signed copy of the consent form back to

the research assistant when they completed the measure. When they returned the completed survey and signed consent form, participants would be offered a separate form to collect their contact information for the gift card raffle if they wished to participate. If they did choose to enter the raffle, they would be assured that the information collected on the forms would be kept separate from other research records. Once the study closes to enrollment, the raffle will be performed and these records would be destroyed.

Although the option to complete the survey in person was provided, all participants chose to complete the survey online.

Survey launch and completion. On the evening of the survey launch, the researcher was informed that there was a glitch in the survey that prohibited participants from successfully gaining entry. The issue was resolved shortly, resulting in the total time of the glitch being about an hour and a half.

Shortly after the survey launch, the recruitment and enrollment procedures were temporarily deactivated when the number of completed surveys reached 248. Since the IRB-approved survey cap was 250, I had to submit an amendment to increase the cap to 500. I also made an edit to the survey indicating that only the first 250 participants who entered the raffle would be eligible to win a gift card. Prospective participants were informed of this deactivation via the Qualtrics software and the study Facebook page. Once approval from the IRB was received, the survey was reactivated and recruitment efforts continued. In total, the survey was disabled for approximately 14 hours.

At the time of download, approximately 430 individuals had completed the screening questionnaire. Of those, some chose not to complete the survey in its entirety.

Others were denied access to the full survey because they did not meet the eligibility requirements. Some were permitted access but chose not to complete the survey. Of the 430 interested participants, 285 individuals completed the survey in its entirety and 251 met the education minimum requirement (i.e., some college experience or more) at the time of the data download. An enrollment tree for survey participants can be found in Appendix G.

Confidentiality. Participants who completed the survey on Qualtrics were assigned an anonymous ID number by the Qualtrics software. Research staff members were trained to assign ID numbers to participants' packets for those who chose to complete the measure in person. The data set was accessible only to trained research staff. Since no participants chose to complete the survey in person and the online survey did not request any personal information, there are no identifiers attached to the participants.

For the purposes of the master's thesis timeline, data collected by March 7, 2016 were downloaded, cleaned, and prepared for analysis. The survey shall continue to remain open for 1 year or until the enrollment cap of 500 is reached, whichever comes first. Identifying information (e.g., IP addresses) was removed from the raw data set after it was downloaded. The de-identified data will be stored on Dr. Smith Bynum's password-protected research computer indefinitely.

Identifiable information collected for the raffle is stored separately from survey responses on the Qualtrics database. This identifiable information includes the names, email addresses, and phone numbers of the participants who wished to be entered. It will be destroyed 2 years after the survey is closed to new data collection.

Results

I aimed to create a scale that measures the attitudinal and affective dimensions of the perception of a shortage of “marriageable” African American men among African American women. The original measure contained 22 items that were either affective or attitudinal in nature.

Examination of the Original Scale Items

Descriptive statistics were computed on all 22 of the items created for the *Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage scale*. Since most of the items conveyed a negative tone, three items were reverse-coded in the final analyses. They included the following, “ I am excited about my chances of finding a good black man to marry,” “There are enough black men available for me to find someone and form a lasting relationship,” and “ I am happy with the number of good black men available for me to date.”

Review of the 22 items indicated that one item, “I have given up on trying to find a good black man to marry,” did not appear to measure an affective or attitudinal subdimension within the scale. The item was removed from the final analysis because it was neither attitudinal or affective, but rather behavioral. With the deletion of this item, the final scale consisted of 21 total items.

Univariate Analysis of Scale Items

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for each scale item that comprises the *Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage scale*. As noted previously, there were 22 items for which response options ranged on a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). One of the items was removed from the final scale after data collection was completed. It

stated “I have given up on trying to find a good black man to marry.” Further evaluation of the item indicated that it was distinct in content from the other scale items due to its focus on behavior rather than attitude or emotion. Most responses to the scale items had mean scores that ranged from 2.5 to 3.2. Respondents used the full range of response options for each of the items on the scale. In the final scale, the item with the lowest mean ($M = 2.27$) was “It seems hopeless to me that I will find a good black man to marry,” while the item with the highest mean ($M = 3.70$) was “Professional African American women outnumber professional African American men.” The item with the lowest mean ($M = 2.27$) was “It seems hopeless to me that I will find a good black man to marry,” while the item with the highest mean ($M = 3.70$) was “Professional African American women outnumber professional African American men.”

Bivariate analysis for the scale items. Pearson’s correlations were completed for all scale items. These results are displayed in Table 3. All but two of the items were mildly, moderately, or strongly correlated with each other in a positive direction at .05 or .01 significance levels. Most of the inter-item correlations ranged from .33 - .50. The reverse-coded items were used in conducting the correlations.

There were several notable correlations between attitudinal items and affective items. The items with the highest correlations were the affective items, “I am frustrated because I do not believe I will find a good black man to marry” and “I feel anxiety that I will never marry (or remarry) due to a shortage of black men I’d prefer to marry” ($r = .69, p \leq .01$) and “I am frustrated because I do not believe I will find a good black man to marry” and “It seems hopeless to me that I will find a good black man to marry” ($r = .69, p \leq .01$).

Additionally, the affective item, "I am frustrated by my efforts to find a black husband" was positively correlated with the affective item, "I am afraid that I will not find a good black man to marry" ($r = .63, p \leq .01$).

The attitudinal items, "There are not enough good black men out there for me to find a husband" and "There is too much competition from other women for me to find a good black man to marry" were also strongly positively correlated ($r = .53 p \leq .01$). The attitudinal item, "I believe that in order to get married to a black man, I will have to lower my standards for my ideal mate" was moderately correlated with several other attitudinal items, including: "There is too much competition from other women for me to find a good black man to marry" ($r = .48 p \leq .01$), "Black men do not commit to black women because they have so many dating options" ($r = .48 p \leq .01$), and "I do not believe that I will find a black male partner with all of the qualities I consider important" ($r = .50 p \leq .01$).

There were also several significant correlations between attitudinal and affective items. The affective item, "I am afraid that I will not find a good black man to marry" was strongly correlated with the attitudinal item, "There is too much competition from other women for me to find a good black man to marry" ($r = .55 p \leq .01$). The reverse-coded affective item, "I am happy with the number of good black men available for me to date" was positively correlated with the attitudinal item, "There are not enough single black men in the professional workforce for me to date" ($r = .49 p \leq .01$). The attitudinal item, "I believe that in order to get married to a black man, I will have to lower my standards for my ideal mate" was also positively correlated to the affective item, "It seems hopeless to me that I will find a good black man to marry" ($r = .53 p \leq .01$), and the item, "I am frustrated

because I do not believe I will find a good black man to marry” was positively correlated to the item, “There are not enough good black men out there for me to find a husband” ($r = .50$ $p \leq .01$).

Two items were drawn from another scale and incorporated into the *Plausibility* scale. They were “Professional African American women outnumber professional African American men” and “Eligible African American women outnumber eligible African American men” (Wallace, 2014). These items were mildly or moderately correlated with all other items in the *Plausibility* scale. Correlations of note include that between the items, “Professional African American women outnumber professional African American men” and “There are not enough good black men out there for me to find a husband” ($r = .30$ $p \leq .01$) and between “Eligible African American women outnumber eligible African American men” and “There are not enough single black men in the professional workforce for me to date” ($r = .39$ $p \leq .01$). The items ““Professional African American women outnumber professional African American men,” and “Eligible African American women outnumber eligible African American men” were most strongly correlated with each other ($r = .50$ $p \leq .01$)

The full list of the final 21 items in the scale can be found in Appendix H.

Examination of Indicators of Reliability and Preliminary Validity of the Scale and Subscales

To assess the reliability and validity of the *Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage Scale*, I computed Cronbach’s alphas for the full scale and the affective and attitudinal

subdimensions, and computed Pearson correlations between the scale items and other measures in the survey.

Internal consistency of the scale. The internal consistency of the scale items was assessed first through computation of a Cronbach's alpha for the 21 final scale items as well as by the two proposed subdimensions (see Table 5). The Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale was .93. The Cronbach's alphas for the attitudinal and affective subscales were .84 and .91, respectively (see Tables 6 and 7).

The correlation between the attitudinal and affective subscales was .77. There were also strong correlations between the affective scale and the full scale was ($r = .95, p \leq .001$) and the attitudinal scale and the full scale ($r = .94, p \leq .001$). These results indicate that, on the basis of internal consistency alone, both the attitudinal and affective subscales could be used separately. However, the internal consistency resulting from use of all scale items was the strongest.

Preliminary evidence of convergent validity

To determine whether there is preliminary evidence of convergent validity for the *Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage* scale, I computed Pearson correlations for the full scale against a set of survey items created for the study that assessed the importance of marriage as a life goal among the study participants.

Correlation analyses of the full *Plausibility* scale and the two subscales with the *Importance of Marriage* scale revealed small positive correlations. The *Importance of Marriage* scale was positively correlated with the full *Plausibility* scale ($r = .19, p \leq .01$), the attitudinal subscale ($r = .17, p \leq .05$), and the affective subscale ($r = .19, p \leq .01$). These

results support the notion that African American women who endorse greater concerns about prospects for marriage to African American men are also more likely to view marriage as an important life goal.

Attitudes about dating African American men. Correlations were completed to determine whether or not the full scale and the subscales were correlated with participant age. Participant age was recoded into categories represented by the age by decade (e.g., 20s, 30s, 40s). The correlation between recoded participant age and the full scale was positive but small ($r = .19, p < .01$). Results also indicated that the recoded age variable was correlated with the affective scale ($r = .20, p < .01$) and the attitudinal scale ($r = .15, p < .05$). Overall, this pattern of relationships indicated that older participants were slightly more likely to view marriage to African American men as less plausible than younger participants. They were also more likely to have negative emotional reactions to the situations as well.

Correlations were also completed to determine if the full scale and subscales were correlated to women's responses to two items that assessed their beliefs about dating African American men. The items were: "Black men have the upper hand over black women in the dating world" and "Black men take black women for granted." The item, "Black men have the upper hand over black women in the dating world" was positively correlated with the full scale ($r = .43, p < .01$), the affective scale ($r = .37, p < .01$), and the attitudinal scale ($r = .45, p < .01$). The item, "Black men take black women for granted" was also positively correlated with the full scale ($r = .34, p < .01$), the affective scale ($r = .32, p < .01$), and the attitudinal scale ($r = .31, p < .01$). These results indicate the more likely participants viewed

African American men as having more power in the dating arena, the more likely they were to view marriage to African American men as being out of reach for them personally.

Similarly, participants who viewed African American men as having more power in the dating arena were also more likely to endorse negative emotions about low prospects for marrying African American men. These findings also serve as evidence of the convergent validity of each of the *Plausibility* scales.

I also completed several correlations to determine whether the *Plausibility* scales were correlated with attitudes regarding openness to interracial marriage. The items were: (1) It is important to me to marry someone of my own race; (2) I only date men of a similar ethnic or racial background; and (3) I am open to marrying a man of a different ethnic or racial background. It was expected that there would be positive correlations between the *Plausibility* scales and the first two items. The correlation test between the *Plausibility* scales and the third item here were considered to be exploratory in light of the literature in this area. Surprisingly, there were no significant correlations between the *Plausibility* scale and the three interracial dating/marriage attitude items. As can be seen in Table 9, there was no relationship between participants' endorsement of openness to interracial dating or interracial marriage. Table 8 displays univariate statistics for the items assessing attitudes about dating African American men and attitudes about dating and marrying interracially.

Participant relationship status and partner race/ethnicity. In a continued effort to evaluate the convergent validity of the *Plausibility* scales, I completed two one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) involving (a) relationship status and (b) partner race/ethnicity to determine whether either variable had an effect on participants' attitudes

and emotions regarding the plausibility of marriage. These analyses were conducted with the full scale only.

Prior to completing the one-way ANOVAs, I examined the relationship status variable to determine whether it needed to be recoded to create more similar cell sizes across each status category. An examination of the frequency counts for relationship status indicated that only 6 participants reported being engaged. An examination of the responses on the *Plausibility* scale by participants who were in an exclusive relationship and participants who were engaged were similar in range. As a result, I recoded the participants' romantic relationship statuses such that participants in an exclusive relationship and women who were engaged were combined into one group prior to conducting the one-way ANOVA. Therefore, the recoded version divided relationship status categories into the following: (1) "single and not dating;" (2) "dating, but not committed to one person;" and (3) "in an exclusive relationship with one person."

Analyses revealed a statistically significant difference for relationship status and endorsement of the *Plausibility* scale, $F(2, 213) = 7.60, p \leq .001$. Post-hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for women who were single and not dating ($M = 59.71, SD = 14.30$) was significantly higher than the mean for women who were in an exclusive relationship at the time of the study ($M = 52.22, SD = 14.64$). In addition, the mean for women who are dating, but not committed to one person ($M = 62.30, SD = 15.76$) was significantly higher than the mean for women who reported being in an exclusive relationship ($M = 52.22, SD = 14.64$). These results suggest that women who were actively dating, but not committed to one person were more likely to believe that marriage

to an African American man was out of reach and to feel negatively about it than women who were not seeking a relationship and women who were in a committed relationship at the time of the study. These patterns of scores indicate that women who were in a committed relationship had fewer concerns about the possibility of marrying an African American man, while women who were dating but not committed to a single partner. This set of patterns is additional evidence of the convergent validity of the measure. The results are presented in Figure 1.

Summary of findings. The results from the above analyses indicate there is preliminary evidence of a plausibility of intraracial marriage construct for African American women based on the 21-item version of the scale. The full scale was internally consistent and reliable, as evidenced by the high Cronbach alpha for the total scale. Moreover, there is evidence that the attitudinal subscale and the affective subscale also are reliable. There were strong correlations between the full scale and each of the subscales.

In addition, results indicated that age is a significant factor in endorsement of the *Plausibility* scale. Small, but stable, correlations were found between age and the full scale and between age and the two subscales. The items comprising the *Importance of Marriage* scale also resulted in small, but stable, correlations with the full, attitudinal, and affective scales.

Finally, small to moderate positive correlations were also found between items that assessed women's beliefs about black men in the dating market. The items, "Black men have the upper hand over black women in the dating world" and "Black men take black women for granted" were moderately correlated with the full *Plausibility* scale as well as

the attitudinal and affective subscales. These results provide additional support for the existence of a plausibility of intraracial marriage construct among African American women. There were no significant correlations found between the *Plausibility* full scale or the subscales and the interracial marriage items. This suggests that African American women have strong attitudes and emotions about the shortage of African American men, despite their interest (or disinterest) in dating and marrying interracially.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to create a reliable and valid measure of attitudes and emotions regarding the perception of a shortage of 'marriageable' African American men. To this end, I created an original measure that included an affective and attitudinal component related to women's perception of the shortage. Preliminary evidence of reliability and validity was obtained.

The original scale, titled the *Plausibility of Intraracial Marriage* scale, consisted of 22 items and was eventually reduced to 21 items to create an internally consistent measure. Results indicated that the internal consistency for the full scale was quite high, as evidenced by Cronbach's alphas. The internal consistency for the affective and attitudinal subdimensions was also strong, indicating that both scales are reliable enough to be used separately. This research offers preliminary validation for eleven attitudinal items as well as ten affective items, all of which are strongly correlated with one another and appear to tap into mating and dating experiences of African American women.

These results suggest that African American women who participated in the study endorsed notions of a shortage of marriageable African American men in the marriage

market. Participants strongly endorsed items that reflect commonly expressed viewpoints in the African American community at the univariate level (e.g., “Black men do not commit to black women because they have so many dating options;” “There are enough Black men available for me to find someone and form a lasting relationship;” “Black women must compete with each other to marry good black men.”) The frequent endorsement of these items, and the full use of the scale for each of the items in measure, reveal that these attitudinal statements do reflect the cognitive reality for some African American women.

Although the attitudes about the shortage are evident in this study, the emotional experience appears to be particularly salient for this sample of African American women. Though the full scale was found to be highly internally consistent, the affective subscale resulted in an equally high Cronbach’s alpha. Moreover, several correlations conducted with the affective scale were statistically and in the same direction as correlations involving the full scale. This suggests an emotional experience in the dating market marked by pessimism regarding the likelihood of finding a spouse that very few studies have taken into account, to date.

Analysis of the effect of women’s relationship status on their endorsement of the full *Plausibility* scale revealed significant differences between women who were dating, but not committed to one person or who are single and not dating and those who are in an exclusive committed relationship with one person. More specifically, women who were dating, but not committed to one partner reported the most negative attitudes and emotions regarding their prospects for finding a “marriageable” African American man.. These results suggest that women who were actively dating were engaged in efforts to find

a partner, and thus were likely to be the most aware of the challenge of a shortage of eligible African American men. In comparison, women who were already partnered off with a significant other reported fewer concerns and lower levels of negative emotions about finding a “marriageable” African American man. Collectively this pattern adds to the evidence that the content captured in the full version of the *Plausibility* scale reflects lived realities in the women’s lives.

Less clear is the meaning of the patterns for women who were single but not actively dating. These participants were not significantly different from those in committed relationships at the time of the study. This group of women may not be pursuing relationships because they are concerned with other activities such as work or parenting. Some women may have decided to deemphasize this area of their lives at some earlier point. Future research is needed to understand this group of women and their motivations to find a romantic partner, and under what conditions do attitudes and emotions become more or less salient.

As predicted in the first hypothesis, the *Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage Scale* did display internal consistency. The final results also suggest preliminary evidence of convergent validity as indicated by several small, but statistically significant, correlations between the full scale and items assessing the importance of marriage to the participants. The hypothesis that the *Importance of Marriage* scale would be positively correlated to the full *Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage* scale as well as the affective and attitudinal subdimensions were supported. I generally expected that these relationships would be positive since women who value marriage would be more attuned to the shortage of

marriageable men. There were also moderately-sized and stable correlations between the full scale and subscales and women's attitudes regarding dating African American men. Interestingly, this limited evidence of convergent and construct validity suggests that women who score higher on the *Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage* scale also view marriage as an important factor in their lives.

This evidence is in line with what other researchers have reported about African American women's desire for marriage (Hatchett, Veroff, & Douvan, 1995; Haynes, 2000; Porter & Bronzaft, 1995; Ross, 1997). Though marriage rates have declined over the past 50 years, African American women do desire to marry at some point in their lives (Dixon, 2009; Wang & Parker, 2014). The results of this study corroborate the idea that marriage is important to African American women; moreover, women who hold marriage in high regard may also be more aware of a shortage of African American men, as reflected in the correlations between the importance of marriage items and the plausibility of marriage items in the survey.

There is very limited research on African American women's thoughts, attitudes, and emotions related to the availability of African American men in the dating and marriage market. In her dissertation research, Wallace (2014) explored constructs related to mating and dating among male and female African American college students. Whereas the present study focused on African American women's attitudinal and affective experiences in relation to the mating and dating market, Wallace's (2014) study sought to explore the traits and criteria that college students seek in a mate and the role that the social and marriage market conditions play in mate selection. Two of her items were

incorporated into the *Plausibility of Intrasexual Marriage Scale* (i.e., *Professional black women outnumber professional black men* and *Eligible black women outnumber eligible black men*) and proved to be strongly correlated with the other new items in the scale. Both of those items address attitudinal components of a perception of a shortage. The present study is unique in that it begins to address the affective dimension of the perception of a shortage as well.

The mate selection market as a stressor for African American women.

Although social exchange theory, dyadic power thesis, and mate availability theory are suitable guiding frameworks for this study, the results indicate that stress and coping theory, developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), adds another helpful perspective of how African American women experience the dating market. The theory posits that cognitive appraisal and coping are the two processes that mediate stressful person-environment interactions and their short and long-term consequences. Through cognitive appraisal, individuals determine if and how a situation harms or benefits their well-being (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986). Using primary appraisal, an individual decides if anything is at stake in the encounter. In secondary appraisal, an individual evaluates what, if anything, can be done to overcome or prevent harm, and maximize benefits (Folkman et al., 1986). Coping, the second process, occurs when the individual changes his/her attitudes and behaviors to manage external and/or internal demands (Folkman et al., 1986). Coping is used to regulate stressful emotions and if necessary, to alter the environment or relationship that is causing distress.

This theory appears to be particularly relevant to African American women in the marriage market who are contending with a shortage of marriageable African American men. African American women make a subjective evaluation of the “event” (i.e., the sex-ratio imbalance) which influences their resultant distress (or lack thereof) regarding their options in the marriage market. In the process making a cognitive appraisal, African American women determine if they view this as a stressor or a reality that is unimportant to them. Some women will view the shortage neutrally, some may not have an emotional or cognitive response to it at all, while others may have a strong emotional and/or cognitive reaction. This study sought to measure the extent of this distress by exploring African American women’s attitudinal and affective responses in relation to their perception of a shortage of marriageable African American men. This is born out in the finding demonstrating that women who were actively dating and seeking a partner also were the most pessimistic and distressed about their prospects.

Generalizability and Limitations of Findings

Though findings here provide compelling evidence for the new *Plausibility* measure, the study is not without limitations. First, the survey relied heavily on dissemination within the college campus setting. However, the study was also publicized outside of campus communities and may be generalizable to women outside of the academic environment. In addition, the survey had a small number of sources of potential bias and other threats to validity. First, the data were collected entirely online. While I implemented a screener to eliminate anyone who did not meet the survey criteria, the survey was completely anonymous, so there is no way to verify the participant’s sampling criteria (Dillman, Smyth,

& Christian, 2014). Additionally, due to a survey setting in Qualtrics, the survey was closed to participants if they did not complete it within 48 hours. There may be systematic differences between those who started the survey and did not complete it within 48 hours and those who completed it faster.

The survey also relied on a snowball recruitment strategy. Though this method allowed me to reach a relatively large population in a short period of time, it affords very little control. In its present form, the sample is not representative of the population of upwardly mobile African American women in the U.S. For instance, the research team is based in the Mid-Atlantic region and participants from this area are overrepresented in the sample based on an inspection of the open-ended responses to the participants' city of residence.

Finally, this survey was targeted to African American women's dating experiences in relation to African American men. Although there was a section of the survey that assessed openness to interracial marriage, I was only able to examine this issue in a limited way in the present study. Thus far, openness to interracial dating and marriage appear to be unrelated to single African American women's attitudes and emotions about the plausibility of marriage to African American men. However, there may be significant differences between the participants that responded to the survey and those who did not on this matter. Perhaps women who date men of other races are not particularly attuned to a shortage of marriageable African American men because they have a much larger dating pool comprised of men from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. If this is the case, they may not have endorsed some items of the *Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage*

Scale as strongly as women who exclusively date African American men (Levin, Taylor, & Caudle, 2007).

Conclusions and Future Research

To date, very little research has been done on this topic, leaving the unique dating experiences of African American women largely unexplored. The results presented here suggest that there are important factors to consider regarding not only the number of eligible men available, but African American women's belief in the likelihood that they will find a lifelong marriage partner, as well as the resultant perception of the importance of relationships and marriage in their lives. It is worth exploring the alternative routes that African American women may choose in the face of this reality, such as interracial dating or the choice to remain single. By creating and validating a measure that contains both an affective and attitudinal component about this reality, I hope that I have begun to pave the way for further analysis of dating, mating, and relationship formation patterns in the African American community.

In future work, researchers should replicate the results and seek test-retest reliability. Finally, they may determine additional measures to be used to test for convergent and predictive validity. Plans also include the completion of factor analysis on the *Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage Scale*. Despite the limited scope of the current work, it does successfully begin to systematically explore the existence of a perception of a shortage of marriageable African American men among African American women. This research should serve to advance efforts to understand African American women's emotional and attitudinal experiences in the African American marriage market

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic	n	%
Age		
18 - 19	24	9.6
20 - 29	181	72.1
30 - 39	21	8.4
40 - 49	21	8.4
50 - 64	4	1.6
Ethnicity		
Black/African American (Non-Hispanic)	196	78.1
Black Central American	1	.4
Afro-Caribbean	21	8.4
African	15	6.0

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Characteristic	n	%
Biracial	16	6.4
Other	2	.8
Education		
Some college	85	33.9
Associate degree	19	7.6
Bachelor's degree	66	26.3
Some graduate school	27	10.8
Master's degree	48	19.1
Professional degree (e.g., M.D., D.D.S., D.V.M., L.L.B., J.D.)	4	1.6
Doctorate degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D.)	2	.8
Marital Status		
Single	241	96
Engaged	5	2.0

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Characteristic	n	%
Divorced	5	2.0
Relationship Status		
Single and not dating	102	40.6
Dating, but not committed to one person	58	23.1
In an exclusive relationship with one person	54	21.5
Engaged	6	87.6

Note: $n = 251$ for the full sample. $n = 216$ for relationship status due to missing data on this measure.

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Table 2

Univariate Statistics for Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage Scale

Item	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max
1. There is too much competition from other women for me to find a good black man to marry. (ATT)	2.43	1.072	2.00	1	5
2. There are not enough good black men out there for me to find a husband. (ATT)	2.54	1.188	2.00	1	5
3. Some black men will not commit to marriage because there are so many black women to date. (ATT)	2.83	1.216	3.00	1	5
4. Black men do not commit to black women because they have so many dating options. (ATT)	3.13	1.274	3.50	1	5
5. I have given up on trying to find a good black man to marry.	1.85	.972	2.00	1	5
6. I am afraid that I will not find a good black man to marry. (AFF)	2.62	1.275	2.00	1	5
7. I am frustrated by my efforts to find a black husband. (AFF)	2.62	1.256	2.00	1	5
8. Professional African American women outnumber professional African American men. (ATT)	3.70	1.003	4.00	1	5
9. I am excited about my chances of finding a good black man to marry. (R) (AFF)	2.46	1.051	2.00	1	5

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Item	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max
10. There are not enough single black men in the professional workforce for me to date. (ATT)	3.04	1.057	3.00	1	5
11. At times, I get disillusioned by my experiences in trying to find a black man as a life partner. (AFF)	3.20	1.163	3.00	1	5
12. I do not believe that I will find a black male partner with all of the qualities I consider important. (ATT)	2.58	1.150	2.00	1	5
13. Eligible African American women outnumber eligible African American men. (ATT)	3.57	1.027	4.00	1	5
14. I believe that in order to get married to a black man, I will have to lower my standards for my ideal mate. (ATT)	2.47	1.156	2.00	1	5
15. There are enough black men available for me to find someone and form a lasting relationship. (R) (ATT)	3.39	1.061	4.00	1	5
16. I am happy with the number of good black men available for me to date. (R) (AFF)	3.37	1.013	4.00	1	5
17. I feel discouraged about dating because there are not enough good black men in my community. (AFF)	2.82	1.204	3.00	1	5
18. I feel anxiety that I will never marry (or remarry) due to a shortage of black men I'd prefer to marry. (AFF)	2.61	1.233	2.00	1	5
19. I have resigned myself to the possibility that I may not marry a black man because there are not enough. (AFF)	2.55	1.222	2.00	1	5

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Item	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max
20. Black women must compete with each other to marry good black men. (ATT)	2.85	1.223	3.00	1	5
21. It seems hopeless to me that I will find a good black man to marry. (AFF)	2.27	1.025	2.00	1	5
22. I am frustrated because I do not believe I will find a good black man to marry. (AFF)	2.36	1.078	2.00	1	5

*Note: Each item range was structured such that 1 = *Strongly Disagree* and 5 = *Strongly Agree*. (R) denotes reverse coded item. (ATT) denotes attitudinal item. (AFF) denotes affective item.

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Table 3

Correlations among items on the Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage Scale

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
1. There is too much competition from other women for me to find a good black man to marry.	1.0																						
2. There are not enough good black men out there for me to find a husband.	.53**	1.0																					
3. Some black men will not commit to marriage because there are so many black women to date.	.43**	.36**	1.0																				
4. Black men do not commit to black women because they have so many dating options.	.49**	.47**	.49**	1.0																			

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
5. I have given up on trying to find a good black man to marry.	.32**	.43**	.12	.28**	1.0																	
6. I am afraid that I will not find a good black man to marry.	.55**	.52**	.37**	.41**	.44**	1.0																
7. I am frustrated by my efforts to find a black husband.	.34**	.45**	.30**	.33**	.39**	.63**	1.0															
8. Professional African American women outnumber professional African American men.	.24**	.30**	.22**	.18**	.19**	.26**	.24**	1.0														
9. I am excited about my chances of finding a good black man to marry. (R)	.31**	.40**	.12	.40**	.49**	.38**	.35**	.30**	1.0													
10. There are not enough single black men in the professional workforce for me to date.	.39**	.44**	.30**	.36**	.26**	.39**	.40**	.31**	.31**	1.0												

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
11. At times, I get disillusioned by my experiences in trying to find a black man as a life partner.	.29**	.29**	.33**	.39**	.21**	.46**	.61**	.16*	.28**	.43**	1.0											
12. I do not believe that I will find a black male partner with all of the qualities I consider important.	.31**	.30**	.17*	.34**	.41**	.39**	.35**	.19**	.35**	.35**	.34**	1.0										
13. Eligible African American women outnumber eligible African American men.	.26**	.29**	.13	.27**	.19**	.26**	.19**	.50**	.28**	.39**	.19**	.31**	1.0									
14. I believe that in order to get married to a black man, I will have to lower my standards for my ideal mate.	.48**	.42**	.35**	.48**	.37**	.53**	.44**	.28**	.43**	.43**	.42**	.50**	.29**	1.0								
15. There are enough black men available for me to find someone and form a lasting relationship.	.20**	.26**	.08	.17**	.28**	.25**	.34**	.17*	.32**	.25**	.18**	.15**	.22**	.33**	1.0							

(R)

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
16. I am happy with the number of good black men available for me to date. (R)	.40**	.44**	.33**	.43**	.36**	.43**	.41**	.28**	.39**	.49**	.37**	.38**	.36**	.48**	-.43**	1.0						
17. I feel discouraged about dating because there are not enough good black men in my community.	.47**	.45**	.20**	.37**	.41**	.55**	.62**	.30**	.38**	.44**	.47**	.34**	.26**	.46**	-.26**	.51**	1.0					
18. I feel anxiety that I will never marry (or remarry) due to a shortage of black men I'd prefer to marry.	.37**	.41**	.29**	.31**	.35**	.64**	.64**	.31**	.33**	.43**	.52**	.39**	.27**	.49**	-.32**	.46**	.54**	1.0				
19. I have resigned myself to the possibility that I may not marry a black man because there are not enough.	.36**	.45**	.19**	.34**	.54**	.44**	.48**	.33**	.51**	.41**	.39**	.48**	.29**	.54**	-.32**	.47**	.53**	.51**	1.0			
20. Black women must compete with each other to marry good black men.	.37**	.31**	.25**	.33**	.20**	.32**	.27**	.26**	.22**	.40**	.14*	.27**	.30**	.34**	-.24**	.30**	.32**	.40**	.28**	1.0		

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
21. It seems hopeless to me that I will find a good black man to marry.	.38**	.40**	.15*	.34**	.53**	.51**	.49**	.23**	.44**	.42**	.39**	.50**	.27**	.53**	-.34**	.43**	.49**	.61**	.59**	.35**	1.0	
22. I am frustrated because I do not believe I will find a good black man to marry.	.46**	.50**	.23**	.36**	.44**	.64**	.63**	.30**	.36**	.45**	.48**	.44**	.34**	.52**	-.32**	.44**	.61**	.69**	.57**	.37**	.69**	1.0

Note: * **(R)** denotes reverse coded item. Correlations are based on the recoded versions of the items.
 $p \leq .05$ level (2-tailed). ** $p \leq .01$ level (2-tailed).

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Table 4

One-Way Analysis of Variance for Relationship Status and Partner Race/Ethnicity on Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage Scale

*Note: ** $p \leq .001$ level.*

Variable and source	<i>df</i>	SS	MS	<i>F</i>
Relationship Status				
Between groups	2	3327.60	1663.80	7.61**
Within groups	213	46582.62	218.70	
Partner Race/Ethnicity				
Between groups	1	394.99	394.99	1.68
Within groups	208	48910.71	235.15	

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Table 5

Item-Total Statistics for Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage Scale – Full Scale Version

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. There is too much competition from other women for me to find a good black man to marry. (ATT)	57.92	228.83	.60	.52	.93
2. There are not enough good black men out there for me to find a husband. (ATT)	57.77	225.98	.63	.49	.93
3. Some black men will not commit to marriage because there are so many black women to date. (ATT)	57.48	232.20	.42	.44	.93
4. Black men do not commit to black women because they have so many dating options. (ATT)	57.18	227.05	.57	.51	.93
5. I have given up on trying to find a good black man to marry.	58.46	232.67	.53	.45	.93
6. I am afraid that I will not find a good black man to marry. (AFF)	57.66	220.25	.73	.66	.92
7. I am frustrated by my efforts to find a black husband. (AFF)	57.69	222.32	.68	.65	.92
8. Professional African American women outnumber professional African American men. (ATT)	56.57	235.63	.42	.36	.93

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Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
9. I am excited about my chances of finding a good black man to marry. (R) (AFF)	57.86	230.51	.58	.46	.93
10. There are not enough single black men in the professional workforce for me to date. (ATT)	57.26	229.15	.60	.43	.93
11. At times, I get disillusioned by my experiences in trying to find a black man as a life partner. (AFF)	57.11	227.95	.57	.53	.93
12. I do not believe that I will find a black male partner with all of the qualities I consider important. (ATT)	57.76	230.06	.53	.39	.93
13. Eligible African American women outnumber eligible African American men. (ATT)	56.75	235.50	.42	.39	.93
14. I believe that in order to get married to a black man, I will have to lower my standards for my ideal mate. (ATT)	57.84	224.06	.69	.54	.92
15. There are enough black men available for me to find someone and form a lasting relationship. (R) (ATT)	57.70	234.37	.43	.35	.93
16. I am happy with the number of good black men available for me to date. (R) (AFF)	56.94	228.78	.64	.50	.93
17. I feel discouraged about dating because there are not enough good black men in my community. (AFF)	57.49	224.39	.67	.56	.93

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Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
18. I feel anxiety that I will never marry (or remarry) due to a shortage of black men I'd prefer to marry. (AFF)	57.71	222.29	.70	.64	.92
19. I have resigned myself to the possibility that I may not marry a black man because there are not enough. (AFF)	57.75	223.57	.68	.55	.92
20. Black women must compete with each other to marry good black men. (ATT)	57.46	231.49	.45	.32	.93
21. It seems hopeless to me that I will find a good black man to marry. (AFF)	58.04	228.12	.67	.61	.93
22. I am frustrated because I do not believe I will find a good black man to marry. (AFF)	57.96	225.15	.74	.67	.92

*Note: (ATT) denotes attitudinal item. (AFF) denotes affective item.

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Table 6

Item-Total Statistics for Affective Subscale of Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage Scale

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. I am afraid that I will not find a good black man to marry.	24.24	58.05	.70	.54	.90
2. I am frustrated by my efforts to find a black husband.	24.26	57.57	.74	.61	.90
3 I am excited about my chances of finding a good black man to marry. (R)	24.43	63.57	.52	.35	.91
4. At times, I get disillusioned by my experiences in trying to find a black man as a life partner.	23.69	61.01	.60	.43	.90
5. I am happy with the number of good black men available for me to date. (R)	23.51	62.92	.58	.37	.91
6. I feel discouraged about dating because there are not enough good black men in my community.	24.05	59.10	.70	.52	.90
7. I feel anxiety that I will never marry (or remarry) due to a shortage of black men I'd prefer to marry.	24.28	57.98	.74	.61	.90
8. I have resigned myself to the possibility that I may not marry a black man because there are not enough.	24.32	59.30	.67	.51	.90

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Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
9. It seems hopeless to me that I will find a good black man to marry.	24.61	61.49	.69	.56	.90
10. I am frustrated because I do not believe I will find a good black man to marry.	24.53	59.56	.77	.65	.89

Note: * **(R)** denotes reverse coded item.

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Table 7

Item-Total Statistics for Attitudinal Subscale of Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage Scale

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. There is too much competition from other women for me to find a good black man to marry.	29.28	48.52	.61	.42	.82
2. There are not enough good black men out there for me to find a husband.	29.13	47.68	.60	.40	.82
3. Some black men will not commit to marriage because there are so many black women to date.	28.84	49.31	.46	.36	.83
4. Black men do not commit to black women because they have so many dating options.	28.54	47.41	.59	.44	.82
5. Professional African American women outnumber professional African American men.	27.94	51.81	.42	.30	.83
6. There are not enough single black men in the professional workforce for me to date.	28.63	48.92	.59	.36	.82
7. I do not believe that I will find a black male partner with all of the qualities I consider important.	29.13	50.13	.46	.30	.83
8. Eligible African American women outnumber eligible African American men.	28.12	51.07	.45	.34	.83

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Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
9. I believe that in order to get married to a black man, I will have to lower my standards for my ideal mate.	29.21	46.99	.66	.49	.81
10. There are enough black men available for me to find someone and form a lasting relationship. (R)	29.05	52.25	.35	.19	.84
11. Black women must compete with each other to marry good black men.	28.83	49.08	.48	.25	.83

Note. * **(R)** denotes reverse coded item.

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Table 8

Univariate Statistics for Full Importance of Marriage Scale, Attitudes about Dating African American Men, and Attitudes about Interracial Dating and Marriage

Measure	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Importance of Marriage Scale	28.68	5.35	11	42
Attitudes about Dating African American Men				
Black men have the upper hand over black women in the dating world.	3.74	1.09	1	5
Black men take black women for granted.	3.83	.97	1	5
Attitudes about Interracial Dating and Marriage				
I am open to marrying a man of a different ethnic or racial background.	3.91	1.07	1	5
I only date men of a similar ethnic or racial background.	2.85	1.27	1	5
It is important to me to marry someone of my own race.	3.24	1.33	1	5

Note. Response options for the individual items ranged from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

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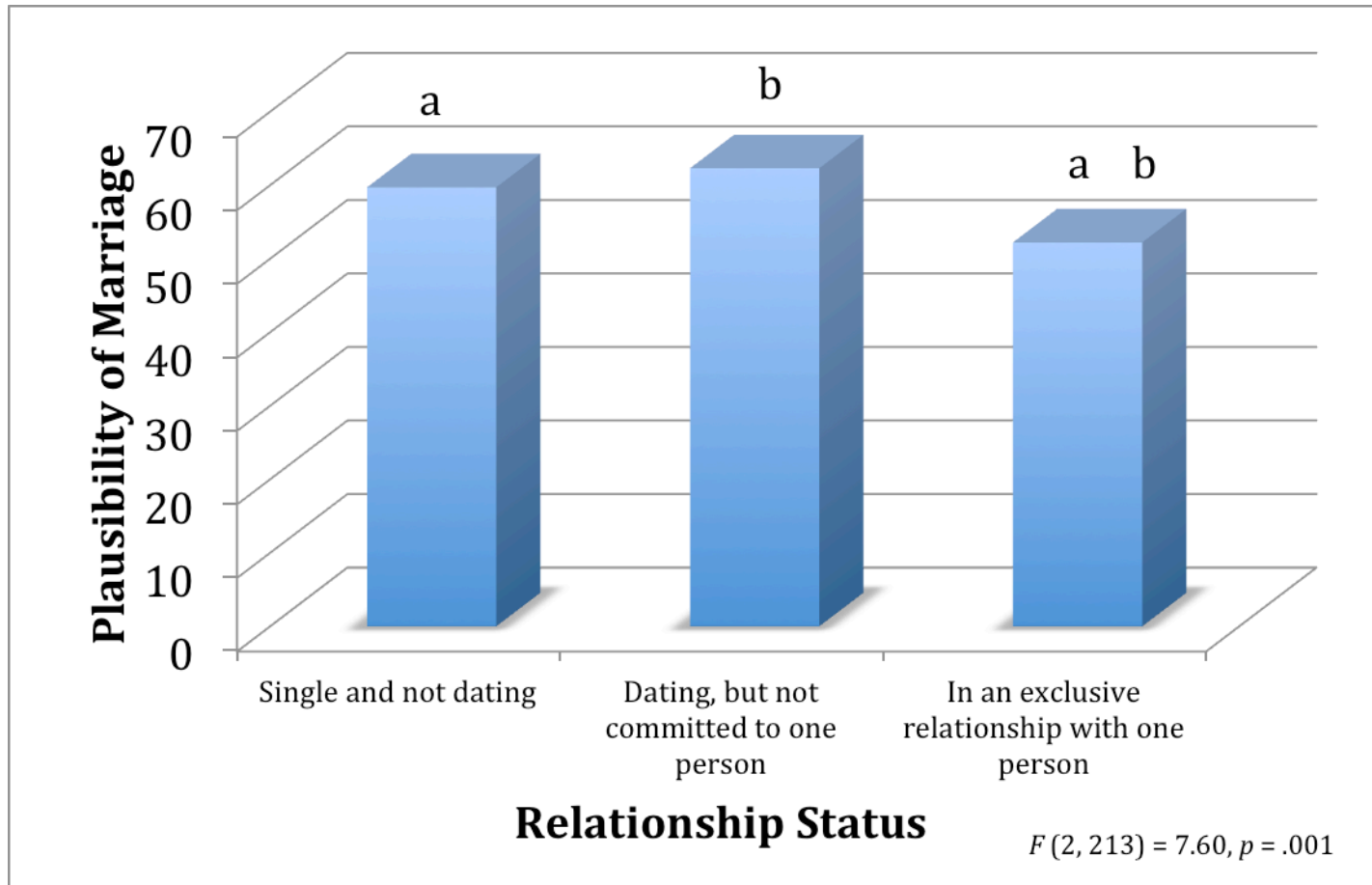
Table 9

Correlations among items on the for Attitudes About Interracial Dating and Marriage and the Plausibility Full Scale and Subscales

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. It is important to me to marry someone of my own race.	1.0	.67**	-.63**	.10	.08	.10
2. I only date men of a similar ethnic or racial background.	.67**	1.0	-.60**	-.04	-.03	-.05
3. I am open to marrying a man of a different ethnic or racial background.	-.63**	-.60**	1.0	-.02	-.01	-.01
4. <i>Plausibility of Intraracial Marriage – Full Scale</i>	..10	-.04	-.02	1.0	.94**	.95**
5. <i>Plausibility of Intraracial Marriage – Attitudinal Scale</i>	.08	-.03	-.01	.94**	1.0	.77**
6. <i>Plausibility of Intraracial Marriage – Affective Scale</i>	.10	-.05	-.01	.95**	.77**	1.0

Note: ** $p \leq .001$ level.

Figure 1. Effect of relationship status on participants' endorsement of the plausibility of marriage to African American men



Note. Relationship statuses with the same letter are statistically significant from one another. Higher scores indicate lower ratings of plausibility of marriage.

Appendices

Appendix A

*The Living Single Project: Dating and Mating in a Black Woman's World – Full
Survey*

The Living Single Project: Dating & Mating in a Black Woman's World: This survey contains several questions that will ask you for information about your general background as well as your attitudes and experiences in respect to dating, marriage, and sex. The questions will also cover information about your behavior in romantic relationships. The entire survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. You will notice that some of the questions listed in the survey are the same as, or similar to, the questions that you answered during the screening process. This is because those answers are not connected to your responses in this survey. Please take the time to answer these questions again as they will help us better describe the participants in this study. Please remember, this survey is confidential. Your responses will NOT be connected to you. Please take your time and answer carefully. If certain questions make you uncomfortable, you may skip them. This survey is most easily viewed on a desktop, laptop, or tablet. If you use a cell phone, be sure to scroll to see all of the answer options before you select an answer. Once you have finished the survey, please click submit. You will then be given the option of entering a raffle for one of two \$50 gift cards for Amazon, iTunes, or Google Play. If you like, please follow the link and enter the requested information on the new form. The information that you enter in this final form will be stored separately from your survey answers to ensure your anonymity and confidentiality. It will only be used to contact you if you have been selected as a raffle winner.

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Background This section will ask you about several different aspects of your background, including your parent's marital status.

What is your current age? (open-ended)

What is your racial/ethnic group?

- Black/African American (Non-Hispanic) (1)
- Black Central American (2)
- Afro-Caribbean (3)
- African (4)
- Black South American (5)
- Biracial or multiracial (please specify) (9) _____
- Other racial/ethnic background (please specify) (10) _____

What is your sex?

- Male (4)
- Female (5)
- Other (please specify) (6) _____
- Prefer not to say (7)

List the city and state where you currently live:

Were you born and raised in the United States?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Were you born and raised in the United States? No Is Selected

In what country have you spent most of your life?

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Please indicate the highest level of education that you have completed.

- Grade school (1)
- Junior high (2)
- Some high school (3)
- High school graduate or equivalent (e.g., GED) (4)
- Diploma or certificate from vocational, technical, trade, or business school (5)
- Some college (6)
- Associate degree (7)
- Bachelor's degree (8)
- Some graduate school (9)
- Master's degree (10)
- Professional school degree (e.g., M.D., D.D.S., D.V.M., L.L.B., J.D.) (11)
- Doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D.) (12)

Please indicate your marital status.

- Single (1)
- Engaged (2)
- Widowed (3)
- Divorced (4)

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What is the total income of your household per year? (select one)

- Below \$5,000 (1)
- \$5,000 to 9,999 (2)
- \$10,000 to \$19,999 (3)
- \$20,000 to \$29,999 (4)
- \$30,000 to 39,999 (5)
- \$40,000 to 49,999 (6)
- \$50,000 to 59,999 (7)
- \$60,000 to 69,999 (8)
- \$70,000 to 79,999 (9)
- \$80,000 to 89,999 (10)
- \$90,000 to \$99,999 (11)
- \$100,000 to \$110,999 (12)
- \$111,000 to 119,999 (13)
- \$120,000 to 129,999 (14)
- \$130,000 to 139,999 (15)
- \$140,000 to 149,999 (16)
- \$150,000 to 159,999 (17)
- \$160,000 to 169,999 (18)
- \$170,000 to 179,999 (19)
- \$180,000 to 189,999 (20)
- \$190,000 to 199,999 (21)
- \$200,000 or higher (22)

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Family Marital History Please indicate your parents' current marital status:

- Never married to each other (1)
- Married to each other (2)
- Divorced (3)
- Separated (4)
- Widowed (5)
- Don't know (6)

True or False?: My parents were married in the past.

- True (2)
- False (4)

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Standards to Marry Below is a series of beliefs that some black women have regarding goals they wish to meet before they get married (or remarried). Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding each belief. There are no right or wrong answers. [NOTE: If you do not wish to get married in the future, select "Not Applicable" for each question.]

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Not Applicable (6)
I must be married before I have children. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would marry a man who is not steadily employed. (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My spouse must have an education level that is equal to or higher than my own. (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

By what age would you like to marry (or re-marry, if applicable)?

Marriage Attitudes Scale We are developing a new scale to assess black women's attitudes and feelings about dating black men and marriage. We are interested in your views regardless of the race or ethnicity of the men you prefer to date. The wider the opinions and views expressed, the better the final scale will be. Below is a list of beliefs that some black women have about the availability of "good" black men to marry. Black women have different definitions of a "good" black man. There are no right or wrong answers. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following

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statements about your prospects of marrying (or remarrying) a black man specifically. (PSGBM scale).

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
There is too much competition from other women for me to find a good black man to marry. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are not enough good black men out there for me to find a husband. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some black men will not commit to marriage because there are so many black women to date. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Black men do not commit to black women because they have so many dating options. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have given up on trying to find a good black	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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man to marry. (7)					
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Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I am afraid that I will not find a good black man to marry. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am frustrated by my efforts to find a black husband. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional African American women outnumber professional African American men. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am excited about my chances of finding a good black man to marry. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

There are not enough single black men in the professional workforce for me to date. (12) At times, I get disillusioned by my experiences in trying to find a black man as a life partner. (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Marriage Attitudes Scale (cont'd) Below is a list of beliefs that some black women have about the availability of "good" black men to marry. Black women have different definitions of a "good" black man. There are no right or wrong answers. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your prospects of marrying (or remarrying) a black man specifically. (PSGBM scale).

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I do not believe that I will find a black male partner with all of the qualities I consider important. (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eligible African American women outnumber	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American
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<p>eligible African American men. (15)</p> <p>I believe that in order to get married to a black man, I will have to lower my standards for my ideal mate. (16)</p> <p>There are enough black men available for me to find someone and form a lasting relationship. (17)</p> <p>I am happy with the number of good black men available for me to date. (18)</p>	○	○	○	○	○
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Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American
Women

Marriage Attitudes Scale (cont'd) Below is a list of beliefs that some black women have about the availability of "good" black men to marry. Black women have different definitions of a "good" black man. There are no right or wrong answers. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your prospects of marrying (or remarrying) a black man specifically. (PSGBM scale).

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American
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	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I feel discouraged about dating because there are not enough good black men in my community. (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel anxiety that I will never marry (or remarry) due to a shortage of black men I'd prefer to marry. (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have resigned myself to the possibility that I may not marry a black man because there are not enough. (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Black women must compete with each other to marry good black men. (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

It seems hopeless to me that I will find a good black man to marry. (18)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am frustrated because I do not believe I will find a good black man to marry. (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American
Women

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
As a black woman, getting married (or remarried) to a good black man is a realistic possibility for me. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American
Women

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Black men have the upper hand over black women in the dating world. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Black men take black women for granted. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Attitudes about Interracial Relationships Below is a list of attitudes that some black women have about interracial relationships. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statements below. There are no right or wrong answers.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I am open to marrying a man of a different ethnic or racial background. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I only date men of a similar ethnic or racial background. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Black women who cannot find suitable black mates should date men of a different race or ethnicity. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to me to marry someone of my own race. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

Dating and Relationship Experiences The following questions will ask about your dating and romantic relationship experiences. There are no right or wrong answers.

Please choose the option that best defines your current relationship status.

- Single and not dating (1)
- Dating, but not committed to one person (2)
- In an exclusive relationship with one person (3)
- Engaged (4)

Answer If Please choose the option that best defines your current relationship status. In an exclusive relationship with one person Is Selected Or Please choose the option that best defines your current relationship status. Engaged Is Selected

How long have you been in your current romantic relationship?

- 2 weeks or less (1)
- Between 2 weeks and 1 month (2)
- Between 1 and 2 months (3)
- Between 3 and 4 months (4)
- 5 - 6 months (5)
- 7 - 8 months (6)
- 9 - 10 months (7)
- 11 months to a year (8)
- 1 - 2 years (9)
- 2 - 3 years (10)
- 3 - 4 years (11)
- 4 - 5 years (12)
- 5+ years (13)

Answer If What is your relationship status? Single and not dating currently Is Not Selected

Are you living with a romantic partner to whom you are not married?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American
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Answer If Are you living with a romantic partner to whom you are not married?
Yes Is Selected

How long have you lived with your current romantic partner?

- Less than a month - 3 months (1)
- 4 - 6 months (2)
- 7 months - 1 year (3)
- 1 - 3 years (4)
- 4 - 5 years (5)
- 5 - 10 years (6)
- More than 10 years (7)

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Where do you meet your prospective romantic partners? (check all that apply)

- Internet dating sites (e.g., Blackpeoplemeet.com, eHarmony, Match.com) (1)
- Social networks (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) (3)
- Clubs, bars, and/or lounges (4)
- Professional settings (e.g., work, conferences) (5)
- Church (6)
- Friends/family (7)
- The gym; fitness classes (e.g., yoga) (9)
- At get-togethers, parties, cookouts (15)
- At the mall; shopping (10)
- While traveling (11)
- Concerts, music festivals, food festivals (12)
- Sports/outdoor activities (13)
- Restaurants, coffee shops (14)
- Community events (2)
- Other (specify) (8) _____

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American
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Importance of Marriage Below is a series of statements that some women hold about the importance of marriage (or remarriage) as a life goal and for personal happiness. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. There are no right or wrong answers.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I would like to get married at some point in my lifetime. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marriage is not essential to a happy life. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Becoming engaged/married is an important accomplishment in my life. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting married will greatly increase my quality of life. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Black women worry too much about getting married. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would rather live with my partner than get married. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel whole without a relationship with a man. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My education/career goals are more important than marriage. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marriage is more	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

important to me than accomplishing my education/career goals. (9)					
I will be relieved if I get married (or remarried). (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is not important for me to find a black man to marry. (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Sexual Behaviors and History The next set of questions address different aspects of your sexual behaviors and history. This information is very important to our study. However, we recognize that some of these questions are quite personal. The information in this section, as other information requested, is confidential and WILL NOT be disclosed or associated with you in any way. We encourage you to answer as honestly and accurately as possible. However, if you do not wish to answer certain items, leave them blank and go to the next question. You can click the button on the bottom right side of your screen if you do not wish to answer the questions on the page.

Indicate the sexual orientation that best describes you.

- Heterosexual/straight (1)
- lesbian (2)
- Bisexual (3)
- Unsure (4)
- Other (5) _____

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Have you ever had sexual intercourse with a male partner?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Indicate the race/ethnicity of majori...

Indicate the age at which you first had sexual intercourse with a male partner.

Have you ever had nonconsensual heterosexual intercourse (i.e., intercourse for which you did not provide consent)?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Have you been sexually active in the past 12 months?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American
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Indicate the number of previous male sexual partners that you have had in the last year. This should include any current partners:

	Over the last year (1)
0 (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
1-2 (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
3-4 (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5-6 (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>
7-8 (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>
9-10 (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>
11-12 (7)	<input type="checkbox"/>
13-14 (8)	<input type="checkbox"/>
15-16 (9)	<input type="checkbox"/>
17-18 (10)	<input type="checkbox"/>
19 or more (11)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Indicate the number of previous male sexual partners that you have had across your lifetime. This should include any current partners:

	Over your lifetime. (1)
0 (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
1-2 (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
3-4 (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5-6 (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>
7-8 (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>
9-10 (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>
11-12 (7)	<input type="checkbox"/>
13-14 (8)	<input type="checkbox"/>
15-16 (9)	<input type="checkbox"/>
17-18 (10)	<input type="checkbox"/>
19 or more (11)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American
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When you have heterosexual sex (with someone of the opposite sex), how often do you use some kind of birth control?

- Never (1)
- Sometimes (2)
- About half of the time (3)
- Most times (4)
- Every time (5)

When you have sexual intercourse, how often do you or your partner(s) wear a condom?

- Never (1)
- Sometimes (2)
- About half of the time (3)
- Most times (4)
- Every time (5)

In the past 12 months, how many times have you had sex with someone who you didn't know very well?

- Never (1)
- Once (2)
- Twice (3)
- At least 3 times (4)

Indicate the race/ethnicity of majority of your sexual and romantic partners.

- African American (Non-Hispanic) (1)
- Caucasian (Non-Hispanic) (2)
- American Indian (3)
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (4)
- Asian (any subgroup) (5)
- Hispanic or Latino (any subgroup) (6)
- Multiracial or other (please specify) (7) _____
- Unsure (8)
- Prefer not to say (9)

We realize that the questions we have asked do not cover all of the issues that exist for a black woman in the dating market. Please write any responses that you have to this questionnaire or the subjects covered by this survey that you would like us to know about. (Open-ended response)

Appendix B

Original Plausibility of Intra-racial Marriage Scale

1. There is too much competition from other women for me to find a good black man to marry.
2. There are not enough good black men out there for me to find a husband.
3. Some black men will not commit to marriage because there are so many black women to date.
4. Black men do not commit to black women because they have so many dating options.
5. I have given up on trying to find a good black man to marry.
6. I am afraid that I will not find a good black man to marry.
7. I am frustrated by my efforts to find a black husband.
8. Professional African American women outnumber professional African American men.
9. I am excited about my chances of finding a good black man to marry. (R)
10. There are not enough single black men in the professional workforce for me to date.
11. At times, I get disillusioned by my experiences in trying to find a black man as a life partner.
12. I do not believe that I will find a black male partner with all of the qualities I consider important.
13. Eligible African American women outnumber eligible African American men.

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14. I believe that in order to get married to a black man, I will have to lower my standards for my ideal mate.
15. There are enough black men available for me to find someone and form a lasting relationship. (R)
16. I am happy with the number of good black men available for me to date. (R)
17. I feel discouraged about dating because there are not enough good black men in my community.
18. I feel anxiety that I will never marry (or remarry) due to a shortage of black men I'd prefer to marry.
19. I have resigned myself to the possibility that I may not marry a black man because there are not enough.
20. Black women must compete with each other to marry good black men.
21. It seems hopeless to me that I will find a good black man to marry.
22. I am frustrated because I do not believe I will find a good black man to marry.

Appendix C

Original Importance of Marriage Scale

1. I would like to get married at some point in my lifetime.
2. Marriage is not essential to a happy life.
3. Becoming engaged/married is an important accomplishment in my life.
4. Getting married will greatly increase my quality of life.
5. Black women worry too much about getting married.
6. I would rather live with my partner than get married.
7. I feel whole without a relationship with a man.
8. My education/career goals are more important than marriage.
9. Marriage is more important to me than accomplishing my education/career goals.
10. I will be relieved if I get married (or remarried).
11. It is not important for me to find a black man to marry.

Appendix D

Recruitment flyer

Seeking black women for a research study on attitudes about marriage

Interested in getting married? Concerned about your prospects? Or is marriage not for you? We want to hear from you!

Share your opinions about dating, finding a mate, and marriage prospects for black women. All viewpoints welcome!

Complete a brief online survey for a chance to receive a \$50 e-gift card to iTunes, Amazon, or Google Play!



Participants must be:

- Black women
- 18 years of age or older
- Currently enrolled in college or a college graduate

Contact Shyneice Porter at bfrg@umd.edu
for more information

http://go.umd.edu/livingsingle_sc

 go.umd.edu/livingsinglefacebook

Appendix E

Recruitment Targets

University of Maryland Listservs

School of Public Health graduate, undergraduate, faculty and staff

Department of Family Science (all members)

Diversity and Inclusion (university-wide)

Nyumburu (University of Maryland campus cultural center).

University of Maryland campus organizations

Graduate Student Life

Association of Minority Future Educators

Black Communication Society

Black Business Association

Black Engineers Society

Black Honors Caucus

Black Law Student Association

Mary McLeod Bethune Society

Maryland Association of Black Journalists

Minority Association of Psychology Students

Society of African American Studies

African Student Association

Black Student Union

Caribbean Students Association

NAACP (at UMD)

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National Council of Negro Women

Black Graduate Student Union

Black MBA Association

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority

Alpha Nu Omega Fraternity

Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.

National Pan-Hellenic Council (group moderator)

Sigma Gamma Rho, Inc.

UMD Black Alumni

University of Maryland Academic Departments

Sociology

African American Studies

Family Science

Howard University Academic Departments/College

Afro-American Studies, Psychology

Sociology and Anthropology

College of Arts and Sciences.

Syracuse University Academic Departments/Organizations

Office of Multicultural Affairs

African American Studies department

Psychology department.

Facebook Public Pages/Groups

African History Network

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HuffPost Black Voices

Hutchins Center for African & African American Research

Institute for African American Research at the University of South Carolina

African American Future Society

Department of African & African-American Studies at Duke University (AAAS)

Divine Nine Greek Unity

Divine Nine Facebook group (closed).

Appendix F

The Living Single Project: Dating and Mating in a Black Woman's World -

Screening Questions

Eligibility Questionnaire Thank you for your interest in the "Living Single Project: Dating and Mating in a Black Woman's World" research study! Please complete the following questions to determine your eligibility for participation in the study.

What is your sex?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

What is your marital status?

- Single (1)
- Separated (3)
- Married (8)
- Widowed (6)
- Divorced (7)

Attitudes and Emotions About Marital Prospects Among African American Women

With what racial/ethnic group do you MOST identify?

- Black/African American (Non-Hispanic) (4)
- Caucasian (Non-Hispanic) (9)
- Latino American (any subgroup) (10)
- Asian (any subgroup) (11)
- Biracial or multiracial (please specify) (12) _____
- Other racial/ethnic background (13)

Answer If With what racial/ethnic group do you MOST identify? Biracial or multiracial (please specify) Is Selected

I have at least 1 parent who is black or has some black heritage.

- True (1)
- False (2)
- Don't know (3)

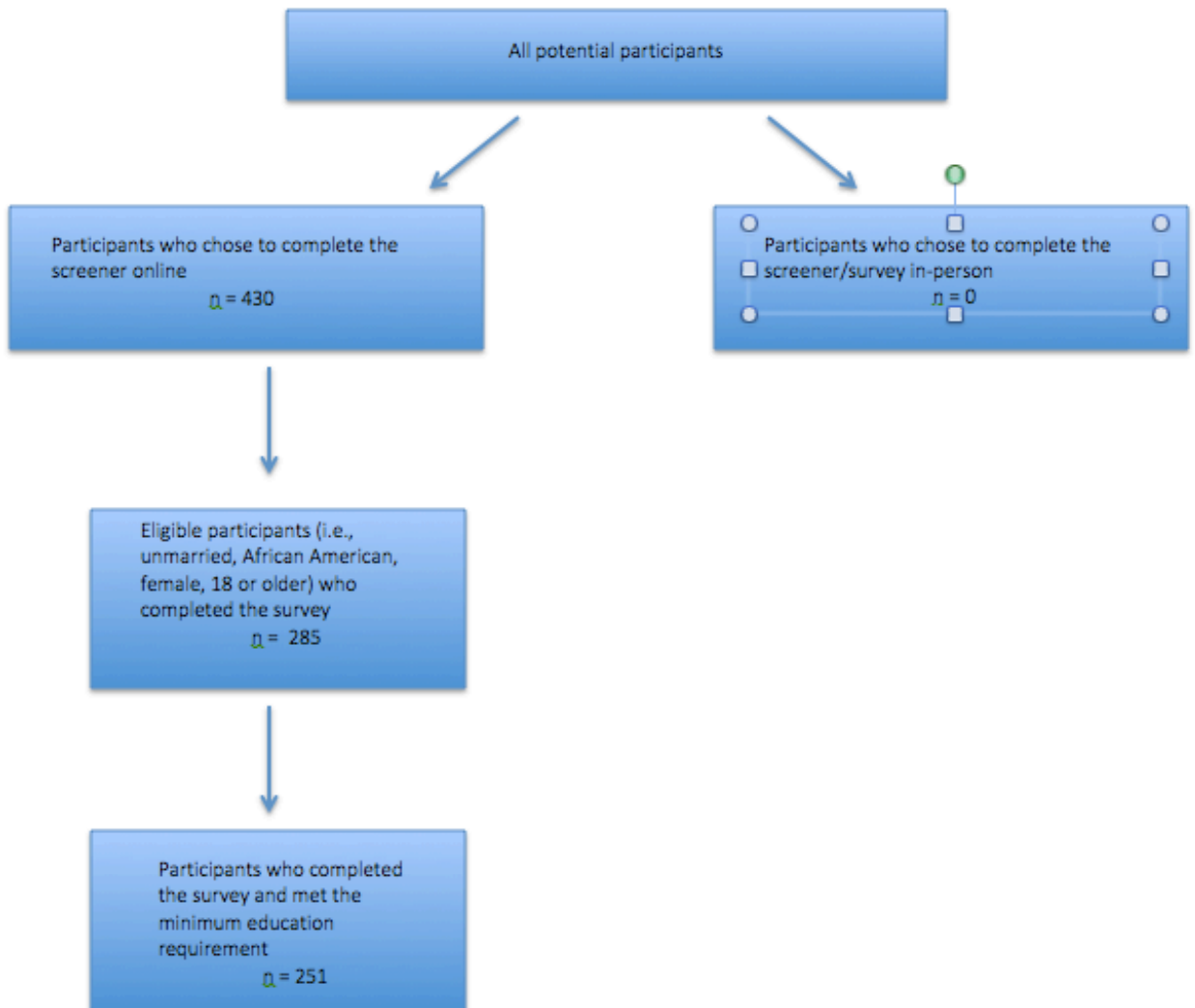
Indicate the sexual orientation that best describes you.

- Heterosexual (1)
- Gay/Lesbian (2)
- Bisexual (3)
- Unsure (4)
- Other (5)

What is your current age? (open-ended)

Appendix G

Recruitment Enrollment tree



Appendix H

Final Plausibility of Intrasexual Marriage Scale

1. There is too much competition from other women for me to find a good black man to marry.
2. There are not enough good black men out there for me to find a husband.
3. Some black men will not commit to marriage because there are so many black women to date.
4. Black men do not commit to black women because they have so many dating options.
5. I am afraid that I will not find a good black man to marry.
6. I am frustrated by my efforts to find a black husband.
7. Professional African American women outnumber professional African American men.
8. I am excited about my chances of finding a good black man to marry. (R)
9. There are not enough single black men in the professional workforce for me to date.
10. At times, I get disillusioned by my experiences in trying to find a black man as a life partner.
11. I do not believe that I will find a black male partner with all of the qualities I consider important.
12. Eligible African American women outnumber eligible African American men.
13. I believe that in order to get married to a black man, I will have to lower my standards for my ideal mate.

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14. There are enough black men available for me to find someone and form a lasting relationship. (R)
15. I am happy with the number of good black men available for me to date. (R)
16. I feel discouraged about dating because there are not enough good black men in my community.
17. I feel anxiety that I will never marry (or remarry) due to a shortage of black men I'd prefer to marry.
18. I have resigned myself to the possibility that I may not marry a black man because there are not enough.
19. Black women must compete with each other to marry good black men.
20. It seems hopeless to me that I will find a good black man to marry.
21. I am frustrated because I do not believe I will find a good black man to marry.

Appendix I

Final Importance of Marriage Scale

1. I would like to get married at some point in my lifetime.
2. Marriage is not essential to a happy life. (R)
3. Becoming engaged/married is an important accomplishment in my life.
4. Getting married will greatly increase my quality of life.
5. I would rather live with my partner than get married. (R)
6. I feel whole without a relationship with a man. (R)
7. My education/career goals are more important than marriage. (R)
8. Marriage is more important to me than accomplishing my education/career goals.
9. I will be relieved if I get married (or remarried).

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