Prospects for Change: Adolescent Male Perspectives on Marital Gender Relations in Ghana

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The process of gender role socialization begins at birth the world over. From early childhood, boys and girls learn different sets of expectations, responsibilities, and personal attributes that males and females should respectively aspire to. Even the roles and expectations surrounding gendered relationships in adulthood and marriage are tied to notions of masculinity learned over the life course. In-depth interviews with 28 boys aged 12-15 in two hinterland towns in Ghana reveal the prospective notions these adolescents have formed. Even at this early age, the data demonstrate a clear recognition of the male authority that marriage conveys. The evidence is quite convincing that gender inequality intensifies as dating relationships become marriages; men garner greater control of their wives through bridewealth payments and traditional husband/wife roles. The data provide some insights into the cultural bases of the power inequities in marriage. We discuss the implications for gender equity in the future.

Although gender inequality is in virtually every human society, few world regions experience the relative female disadvantage present in sub-Saharan Africa. The phenomenon has long been described, analyzed, and discussed, yet progress towards greater gender equity remains remarkably slow. Much of the current discourse focuses primarily on the eradication of educational and occupational disparities across the sexes as a means of increasing women's relative power both inside and outside the home (Llyod and Blanc 1996; UNICEF 1999). However, the most insidious form of gender inequity present in sub-Saharan Africa exists within the context of marriage, and this is most likely transmitted through cultural norms and traditions, instead of economic and educational disparities. In fact, women's domestic inequality is often culturally ingrained in the marriage transaction itself, as bridewealth payments and male control over the initiation of the marriage process are heavily imbued with patriarchal meaning (Dodoo and DeRose 2005).

Through in-depth interviews with 28 boys aged 12-15 in two hinterland towns in Ghana, this paper reveals the prospective notions these adolescents have already formed about their future relationships with women, the importance of marriage, and meaning of bridewealth payments. Due to their youth, respondents most clearly reflect the cultural transmission of gender inequality; their perspectives, not yet influenced by personal experience, illustrate the gendered teachings of families and communities. Even at this early age, the data demonstrate a clear recognition of the male authority that marriage conveys. By comparing respondents' conceptions of normative gender roles before and after marriage in three different spheres of Ghanaian domestic life (domestic violence, household chores, and permission-seeking), the evidence is quite convincing that gender

inequality intensifies as dating relationships become marriages, and much of this inequality can be attributed to the traditional marital process and the exchange of bridewealth payments. This paper also provides some insight into the potential for future gender equity in Ghana.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ghana, a country of 21 million people located on the west coast of Africa, has six predominant ethnic groups (including the Akan, Moshi-Dagomba, Ewe, and Ga) (CIA 2005). The population of the country is quite young; 37% of Ghanaians are under the age of 14, and the median age is just over 20 years old. In 1957, Ghana became the first sub-Saharan country to gain independence and end colonial rule, however the legacy of this history still persists. The country's transition into independence did not occur smoothly; several coups lead to an eleven year period between 1981 and 1992 where the constitution was eliminated and political parties were illegal. Free elections were not reinstated until 1994, and therefore Ghana continues to be a burgeoning democracy. Despite significant stores of natural resources, Ghana is economically reliant on financial assistance from international donors, and the GDP per capita (power purchasing parity) remains at just $2,300. Of those who are in the labor force, 60% work in the agricultural sector, which largely specializes in cocoa, coffee, and rice, among other foodstuffs (CIA 2005).

Gender inequality is pervasive in traditional West African culture. As recently found by the UNDP, Ghana ranked 104th out of 140 countries using a composite index that compared inequalities between men and women using four measures: life expectancy

at birth; adult literacy rate; primary, secondary, and tertiary school enrollment rates; and estimated earned income. Ghanaian women not only have less opportunity to go to school and are less likely to be able to read than their male counterparts, but they earn less income and live shorter lives. And, according to this measure, inequalities between men and women in Ghana are more disparate than 73% of 140 countries worldwide (Watkins 2005).

Gender inequality impacts Ghanaian women in detrimental ways in both the public and private spheres of their lives. Although educational opportunities have increased considerably for girls in recent decades, the closing of the gender gap in schooling has yet to diffuse into other aspects of Ghanaian life. As a traditionally patriarchal society, men continue to hold the preponderance of power in government, the local economy, and particularly in traditional households (Salm and Falola 2002, Adams and Castle, 1994). While some argue that greater education and economic leverage will give wives more negotiating power within marriage (see Oppong 1987) more often than not, familial roles are highly gendered. In fact, gender inequality typically intensifies as dating relationships become marriages; men garner greater control of their wives through bridewealth payments and traditional husband/wife marital roles.

Historical Influences upon Masculinity

In the early twentieth century, the Akan region of Ghana possessed at least three defined types of masculinity; a man could achieve manhood by becoming an elder, establishing himself as an economic "big man," or by marrying women and bearing children (Miescher 2003:90). Elder status was not delineated by a specific age or wealth status, but instead by the individual's reputation in the community, his ability to articulate

himself, and his skill at offering advice and assisting others with conflicts. Only the most successful traders and cocoa farmers earned the title of "big man" and some of these men also achieved traditional positions as community chiefs (Miescher 2003:90). Because both of these statuses were relatively difficult to attain and were achieved by only a small segment of the population, many men gained their sense of masculinity through marrying women and bearing children. Men were required to care for the health and physical wellbeing of their wives, and raise their children to young adulthood. The more financially secure a man became, the more wives and children he could acquire, strengthening his sense of masculinity all the more (Miescher 2003). For those in pre-colonial Asante regions, just north of the Akan, "senior masculinity" was closely connected to men's ability to control and maintain authority and power over their wives and other women (Obeng 2003:193). Women were considered part of men's "accumulated wealth," and if an influential Asante man was disgraced, he could lose his job, money, land and wives, indicating that women were treated almost as possessions of their husbands (McCaskie 1981:486).

The process of achieving manhood in Ghana was greatly complicated by colonialism, which imposed new means of achieving masculinity (that adhered to western ideals) and prevented traditional avenues from persisting (Miescher and Lindsay 2003). Studying gender dynamics "cannot be separated from the colonial experience since, historically, the exploitation of both women and colonies has been fundamental to the global system of capital accumulation, and sexism and patriarchy are part of its embedded ideology" (Acosta-Belén and Bose 1990:300). Through economic stagnation and globalization, men were bifurcated into two main groups: a small group who gained

financial wealth through capitalizing on changing economic systems, and a much larger group who were denied access to economic participation and became financially impotent. Also, with the onset of political transitions and upheaval, the historical strength of traditional ethnic leadership waned, leaving fewer men able to achieve manhood through gaining status as an elder (Miescher and Lindsay 2003). Therefore, the period of colonialism left many Ghanaian men only one traditional avenue towards masculinity: marrying women and bearing children.

While some would argue that Ghanaian women possessed greater rights and autonomy prior to colonization, there is significant evidence that demonstrates that current patriarchy stems from both traditional and colonial roots. Prior to colonization, although lineage ties were strong, the nuclear family existed as a unit of production, economically marginalizing women and solidifying the division of labor within the home (Arhin 1983 in Boni 2001). With the onset of colonization, however, came significant growth of the cocoa industry, which allowed men to better control and exploit the labor of their wives, reducing women's autonomous economic power even more severely (Tashjian 1996 in Boni 2001). Colonization also reduced lineage ties and increased nuclear family cohesion, increasing husbands' rights over their wives and reducing the power previously appropriated to the lineage (Miescher 2003). Though legally sanctifying only monogamous marriages despite the persistence of customary marriages (traditional unions that permit polygyny) colonization aided in the creation of multiple forms of marriage and an intricate system of permissible gender dynamics in the family. Both economic circumstances and the nature of the union (monogamous or polygynous) influence the negotiating power of women (Pitshandenge 1994, Pool 1972, Gage 1995).

Hegemonic Masculinity

Antonio Gramsci's concept of ideological hegemony, argued to be "the result of a slow social process in which consensus is developed between dominant and subordinate groups," is particularly relevant to the system of patriarchy rooted in Ghana today (Komter 1989:191). In an ideological hegemony, subordinate groups adopt and accept the "values, symbols, beliefs, and opinions" set forth by the dominant group, internalizing the needs and interests of those in power as their own (Komter 1989:191). Male dominance in Ghana operates in this fashion; both men and women accept patriarchy as a necessary tradition, perpetuating a hegemonic form of masculinity. According to Van den Brink (1978), Gramsci's ideological hegemony contains three characteristics: the ideology is part of daily thought, the interests of the dominant group are seen as the interests of all, and finally inconsistencies within the ideology are not generally noticed or acknowledged (in Komter 1989). As Comaroff (1992) describes it, hegemonic masculinity can be so omnipresent that it in fact becomes "mute" (29). In other words, Ghanaian men may never have reason to rethink prevailing gendered beliefs and traditions, and inconsistencies within these beliefs remain unquestioned. This concept is quite relevant to later discussion; because of their youth, respondents act as clear reflections of Ghanaian hegemonic masculinity by illustrating the contradictions and prevailing dominant group interests, without filtering these ideas through their own romantic relationship experiences.

Even though a hegemonic masculinity is well established in Ghana, this does not imply that a prevailing masculine typology can be assumed to hold true for all Ghanaian men. Even within the most male dominant of cultures, men negotiate gender roles in a

multitude of ways. As Gutmann (1996) discusses in his ethnography of Mexican masculinities, often in strongly patriarchal environments where research is limited (and often more oriented towards the experiences of women), male identities are painfully reduced and generalized into a single type, to the detriment of empirical understanding. Connell (1995) argues that variation occurs not only between individual men, but also within each man. He asserts that men pursue a "life project involving the making and remaking of identity and meaning" creating an ever evolving sense of masculinity (in Kenway and Fitzclarence 1997: 119). For African men, masculinities become even more complicated; gender roles on the continent are considered "particularly fluid and contentious, heavily articulated with wealth, age, seniority, and ritual authority" (Miescher and Lindsay 2003:4). In other words, male and female roles are perpetually influenced by other statuses; gender roles shift as people age, marry, become parents, and gain economic status. This leads to a "patchwork of patriarchies" as Bozzoli describes it; there are many factors outside of gender that contribute to male and female roles, and significant changes in gender identities take place through the life course (1983:149).

Dating and Ghanaian Youth

Unlike marital relationships which have been studied directly, information on dating relationships in Ghana is most available through literature regarding adolescent sexual activity (see Glover et al. 2003). In many African countries, including Ghana, gender dynamics dictate that sex is a means through which a man "defines and validates [his] masculinity" (Gage 1997:4). Focus groups with male adolescents in Guinea, Kenya, and South Africa found that men believe sexual activity to be an "integral part of initiation into manhood" and those who do not pursue multiple sexual partners are often

teased or ostracized by their peers (Nzioka 2001: 110-111, Gorgen 1998, Matthews et al. 1995). Tying masculine identity to female conquest has significant implication; men are taught early on that asserting power over women can earn them status as a man.

There have also been notable structural changes in Ghana in recent decades that impact the nature and prevalence of dating relationships. As Mench et al. (1999) found in a northern district in Ghana where traditional gender roles predominate, the expansion of education for girls and the resulting decline in early marriage has altered attitudes on traditional sexual and reproductive patterns, even in this rural and isolated region of the country. Traditional practices such as female circumcision that historically shaped the lives of boys and girls, clearly delineating youth and childhood from adulthood and marriage, are significantly less practiced. With the abandonment of traditional practices has come an increased freedom for adolescent boys and girls, and higher rates of premarital sex and dating relationships. Bledsoe and Cohen (1993) also note that girls are menstruating at earlier ages and more likely to freely choose romantic partners than in the past, creating a time of adolescence that did not historically exist.

Similar to marital unions, there is strong evidence that gendered power is a pervasive element within dating relationships (Weiss et al. 2000). For example, gift-giving from males to females is a commonplace part of the dating process in Ghana. Boys demonstrate interest in girls through gifts, and frequently girls expect gifts or financial support throughout the duration of a dating relationship. This dynamic creates the 'sugar daddy' phenomenon, where older men of greater financial means seek out relationships with younger women. This complicates existing gender power dynamics with the statuses of age and wealth, increasing male advantage (Ankomah 1998). As found among

Senegalese adolescents, "…Not many girls or women would enter into a premarital sexual relationship without the potential for material recompense … Men are aware of this conception, and they accept it as fact. In exchange for financial compensation, men gain sexual access and control over young women" (Silberschmidt and Rasch 2001:1821, Silberschmidt 2001). As was shown in Guinea, younger men who cannot financially compete for relationships with their own age-mates, turn to even younger girls for relationships, again exacerbating gendered power dynamics with age difference (Gorgen et al. 1998).

The Importance of Marriage

Marriage in Ghana operates as a cornerstone of the social organization of the society, and is considered an institution through which every Ghanaian adult should pass (Tetteh 1967). Marriage links lineages, creates family systems, legitimizes children, and binds individuals through both legal and socially-binding contracts (Fortes 1978, Bleek 1978, Klomegah 1997). Lineage connections formed through marriage greatly impact the political, economic, and cultural aspects of society (Amoateng and Heaton 1989). Historically, marriage in Ghana was based on an economic arrangement; the nuclear family operated as a unit of production, with husbands working to secure income and wives managing the household and child rearing (Salm and Falola 2002). Also, through uniting two lineages, marriages act as a "definitive transfer of rights [over women] from one lineage to another" (Adams and Castle 1994:163, Takyi 2003). Although marriage is considered an essential and required part of life for all Ghanaian men and women, traditionally it was not the union itself but the sanctioning of children that accompanies marriage and imbues it with significance (Fortes 1978, Bleek 1978, Klomegah 1997). "In

Ghana, to suggest that children are the main reason for marrying is an underestimation: they are the main reason for living" (Sarpong 1974 in Ankomah 1998).

In recent decades, the emphasis in marriage has somewhat shifted from lineage connections to nuclear family ties (Aboderin 2004), and there is some indication that the traditional pronatalist importance of marriage is also waning due to the large financial costs of raising children (Bleek 1978). In fact, the total fertility rate in Ghana is only 3.02 children per woman compared with 6 or 7 children per woman in previous generations (CIA 2005). Also, traditionally among the matrilineal Akan, husbands and wives did not share residences (Salm and Falola 2002). However, today co-residence of spouses is more widely practiced. More individuals are freely choosing marital partners, and they marry in part for the sake of the union itself as well as for the procreation of children and the continuance of the lineage (Salm and Falola 2002). Therefore men and women expect more than economic exchange from their spouses, creating greater marital instability; partners are more likely to leave if they do not feel satisfied with the union.

Although men traditionally maintain control over land and other household resources, as well as the labor of women and children, husbands and wives typically remain economically independent from each other, not only keeping money separate, but also refusing to share with their spouse how much they have earned (Adams and Castle 1994, David 1997). Women do, however, expect daily financial assistance in the form of housekeeping money from their husbands (called chop money) to purchase food for the family, and husbands can exercise control over their wives through threats to withhold chop money, or forcing wives to feel a sense of indebtedness because of their monetary contributions (Ampofo 2000, Clark 1994). Despite this, women's general financial

independence from men allows them to accumulate their own financial resources. Often men prefer the arrangement as well; if they choose to spend money on other women, their wives will remain unknowing of the relationship, or at least unaware of the amount he has spent (Adams and Castle 1994).

Gender dynamics and the relative power women hold within marriage are influenced by many additional factors; if women have the ability to choose their own marital partners (instead of participating in arranged marriages) they frequently hold more negotiating power within the relationship, as was found in Togo through an examination of contraceptive use (Gage 1995). Also, polygynous marriages can provide women greater autonomy from their husbands, but less leverage in regards to available financial resources for the family (Kandiyoti 1988). The socio-economic status of the couple as well as the educational level of both spouses also impacts marital gender roles as well as the stability and perceived satisfaction with the union (Miller 1999).

The Marital Process and Bridewealth

Bridewealth in West Africa originated as an exchange of women between lineages. Among the Bariba in Benin, an economic exchange took place in which men proposed to men of other lineages: "give me your sister or cousin, and I'll give you mine" (Fortes 1978). However, today, the bride's family receives a number of items for bridewealth payments, including clothing, fabric, beads, household goods, and imported products as well as a sum of money negotiated by the families (Aborampah 1999). While some would argue that bridewealth payments are a symbolic gesture that legitimizes marriages and acts as a binding lifetime contract between husband and wife (Aborampah 1999, Salm and Falola 2002), other research indicates that bridewealth payments put

additional restrictions and demands on women after marriage. Boni (2001, 1999) argues that through bridewealth payments, women experience continued subordination after marriage:

> The marriage ritual consists of a monetary payment from the groom to the bride's elder relatives (usually the father, mother, or mother's brother) of a certain amount known as *aseda*, together with the transfer of an alcoholic drink, or *tiri nsa* (*eti nza* in Sefwi). Through marriage, the husband's matrilineage … is involved in the maintenance of the woman and acquires a set of rights over her. The woman shifts subordinate role: from being a dependent of the household of the father/mother/mother's brother to the one of the husband. The man's rights over the wife comprise the benefit from her labor in the form of household chores and partly in the husband's cash-oriented enterprise. Moreover, the wife has to obey and show respect to the husband (Boni 2001: 22).

Other research indicates that bridewealth payments also obligate women to bear children within the marriage; as one respondent stated to researchers in northern Ghana, "You should know that in this place we marry our women with cows. When my father pays the bridewealth, he did that for you to deliver children for me" (Bawah et al. 1999).

For Fortes, one of the cornerstone anthropological researchers on bridewealth in Africa, payments equal a transfer of exclusive sexual rights, reproductive rights, and women's domestic labor to the husband and his lineage (Fortes 1962 in Tambiah 1989). Marriage, in effect, transfers women's decision-making power, autonomy, and responsibility for daily activities from their fathers to their husbands. This paper provides an opportunity to expand upon Fortes's concept of bridewealth; pre- and post-marital gender roles can be similarly explored through three spheres present in the in-depth interviews: domestic violence, household labor, and permission-seeking. Although different from Fortes' three transferred rights, these spheres also provide access to a

broad swath of women's decision-making power, autonomy, and control over daily activities in marriage.

Three Domestic Spheres: Domestic Violence, Household Chores, and Permission-Seeking

Across the African continent, domestic violence within marriage is easily legitimized; half of the women interviewed in a study in Zambia between 2000 and 2001 thought that men could legitimately beat their wives if they "argue with [their husbands], burn the dinner, go out without the husband's permission, neglect the children, or refuse sex" (LaFraniere 2005:2). Also, families often do not protect daughters who are being abused. Violence is seen as providing appropriate 'discipline' to wives, and many families would prefer their daughters to be treated in such a manner rather than divorce and disgrace the family (Ofei-Aboagye 1994). Domestic violence in marriage, so commonplace that it is often treated as invisible in many Sub-Saharan African countries, receives few sanctions, and is widely accepted by both women and men (LaFraniere 2005, Ofei-Aboagye 1994). In a survey of Ghanaian youth, while 73.4% of males believed that there were justifiable reasons for men to beat their wives, 72.7% of females also felt the same (Glover et al. 2003:36).

However, in accordance with Ghanaian tradition, domestic violence is not condoned among those who are not yet married. Rights and responsibilities over women are thought to remain with women's fathers until marriage, and therefore non-marital violence exceeds traditional boundaries. Although less research has been done on pre-marital violence, there does appear to be some acceptance of domestic violence outside of marriage among adolescents; Glover et al. (2003) revealed that even more females

(60.4%) than males (55.9%) felt there to be justifiable situations in which a man can beat his girlfriend.

Household Chores

Historically, household chores in Ghana have been deeply gendered, acting as an essential element of the female identity. In fact, many couples continue to use female cooking as a means to secure a stable sexual relationship. Among the Ashanti in central Ghana, Clark found that even "in classic duolocal marriage, a wife cooks the evening meal in her own house as a preliminary to visiting her husband for the night at his house. In Kumasi, dusk brings a noticeable traffic in children and young to middle-aged women carrying large covered dishes" (Clark 1994:344). Among those in polygynous marriages, an "evenhanded rotation in cooking schedules" allows husbands and wives to negotiate sexual relationships without directly talking about sex (Clark 1994:344).

Women not only do the vast majority of cooking in households, but they also spend more time on other household chores than men. Llyod and Gage-Brandon (1993) found in Ghana that when women share residences with men, their average hours of housework per week goes up (compared to when they remain household heads) while men who combine residences with women spend fewer hours per week completing housework. In other words, female-headed households experienced a smaller chore burden than households with husbands/fathers present.

Worldwide, housework appears to operate independently of women's access to resources and empowerment. From an analysis of developed and developing Southeast Asian and East Asian countries (and the U.S.), Sanchez (1993) found that roles in the family and the distribution of household labor are not greatly impacted by women's

earnings and resources, and that level of national development has little effect on the division of labor between husband and wife in the household. As other studies have revealed, even in highly-developed countries, household chores are seen as women's responsibility, while men can play the 'helping' role, if they so choose (Szinovacz, 1984 in Thompson 1989). Therefore, women's heavy chore burdens are not impacted by public sphere empowerment, and changes in chore distribution must originate within the family itself.

Permission-Seeking

As Ghanaian custom dictates, unmarried women who would like to travel a distance from home must first receive permission to travel from their fathers. However, with marriage and the traditional transfer of rights over women from fathers to husbands, permission must then be obtained from the husband before a wife may travel (Boni 2001). As a respondent in a study in southwestern Nigeria explained, the nature of men's power over women and children in marriage heavily impacts women's permission-seeking:

> A man is—according to how we put it—the husband and the landlord. Men marry women and they control them. They are their masters. We control our children and anything they want to do. Women suffer a lot with children, yet men are the ones to control the children. If my wife wants to go, I won't allow her to take them because I have more power over the children than her … If the wife wants to do something and doesn't tell me, I won't be happy as she doesn't regard me as husband. (Cornwall, 2002:974).

Less research has been done on specific permission-seeking behaviors and women's marital roles in Ghana, however, this aspect of marriage strongly captures the transfer of rights over women from fathers to husbands, and the lack of individual autonomy and decision-making ability many women possess.

DATA COLLECTION

In the summer of 2000, Francis Dodoo (PSU) and Adomako Ampofo (University of Ghana) conducted a set of focus group discussions with male and female youth to explore their conceptions of gender roles throughout the life course. The University of Ghana team then developed a survey that December which was administered to 250 Ghanaian girls and boys attending secondary school in the towns of Akropong and Mampong in the Eastern region of Ghana. The survey ascertained the gender attitudes of respondents through capturing the gendered roles they experienced in their families, schools, and communities. Responses to the survey were used to classify students into different gender attitudinal categories. In the summer of 2001, in-depth interviews were conducted with 57 of the 250 students, who were selected to represent two types of gender orientation: male-dominant and gender-equal. The current study reports on the 28 in-depth interviews conducted with male respondents. The interviews included a variety of topics such as: physical and intellectual differences between boys and girls, the distribution of household chores between boys/girls and men/women, attitudes towards friendships and romantic relationships, differences between dating and marital gender roles, and the power dynamics and negotiation processes that occur between males and females at different life-stages. Respondents first discussed the gender dynamics they witnessed in their daily lives, and then were asked to imagine their future romantic and marital relationships and how they expect to interact with wives and girlfriends.

The 28 male participants gave responses with varying degrees of detail. Traditional Ghanaian culture discourages young people from speaking their opinions in

front of elders; they are taught to offer deference to those who are older or of a higher social status. This cultural norm confounds the data to a degree; some of the respondents were not comfortable discussing intimate topics like relationships and sex with the interviewer, probably because of the age difference and interviewer's higher social status. To combat the shyness and reluctance of some of the respondents, the interviewer (Dodoo) assumed a peer-posture in the interviews, and spoke in the first person as if he were a man negotiating a relationship with his girlfriend or wife. Using this strategy, respondents role-played many common conflicts between men and women, putting both themselves and the interviewer in the specific scenario, and freely offering advice on how to best navigate the situation. The interviewer also probed every response and opinion for substantiation so that respondents did not simply give a socially proscribed response. These techniques helped to better ascertain the respondent's true opinions (and should be kept in mind when reading the samples of interview transcript that follow). The transcribed interviews range in length from 10 to 30 pages, and the average length of the interviews was about one hour.

All participants were interviewed early in their first term of JSS 1, the first year of secondary school and equivalent to the 6^{th} grade in the United States. Participants ranged in age from 12 to 15 (because of school disruptions, such an age distribution for this grade level is not uncommon in Ghana). Respondents were at an age where their individual ideas on gender roles were probably just taking shape, but at which peer influences on idea formation about marriage, relationships, and sexuality were not yet a pervasive force; indeed, conducting the interviews among new entrants to JSS 1 was precisely to minimize this influence. As a result, the data likely capture the familial

(rather than peer) effects on the gender socialization of boys. Participants were old enough to articulate their ideas on gender roles and differences between men and women, but these ideas still closely reflect the attitudes and perspectives taught to them at home.

Most respondents considered themselves to be part of the Akwapim tribe, a smaller division of the Akan group,[1] although some respondents came from other regions in Ghana. Respondents were similarly homogenous in regards to religious affiliation; most respondents considered themselves to be of Protestant/Christian faith. Respondents did, however, differ in lineage type; while the majority of respondents reported patrilineal inheritance (through the father's family), a sizeable minority inherited matrilineally (through the mother's family). In terms of socio-economic status and family income, respondents were not asked specific information beyond parental employment. However, it was apparent that a wide variety of socio-economic levels were present in the interviews; while more than two respondents had parents who lived abroad in Western countries (implying significant local financial status), other respondents had parents who farmed or participated in low-skilled employment. While fathers worked a wide range of jobs, from pension officer to taxi driver, most mothers held traditionally female occupations, such as trading or teaching. Still, whereas one mother was currently in college, another defied traditional gender roles with work as a policewoman.

METHODOLOGY

Analysis was done in the tradition of Grounded Theory (Creswell 1998, Strauss and Corbin 1990). Interviews were first coded using the open coding technique, where

[1] Akans are a useful point of departure as they represent a matrilineal group among whom, theoretically, unequal gender relations are least favorable.

interview text was organized by topic through a system of numerical, nested codes. (See Appendix 1) For example, every block of text discussing parental employment of a respondent was coded with the number (2). Paternal and maternal employment were then separated into codes (2 1) and (2 2), respectively. Once the open coding process was complete, transcripts were imported into the qualitative software package, Nud*ist 6. Coding refinements were then made through a second round of coding (axial coding), at which point inductive hypotheses could be explored. To continue with the previous example, maternal employment was at this point separated into two codes: high status (2 2 1) and low status (2 2 2) to determine whether maternal employment impacted the gender attitudes of respondents. Crosstabs and simple frequency distributions between final codes were used to examine the plausibility of general trends in respondent gender attitudes.

According to Gramsci's concept of ideological hegemony, gender attitudes may remain contradictory and yet unquestioned by the individual (Komter 1989). For example, the vast majority of respondents believe boys and girls are equally intelligent and hardworking at school. Some even concede that girls are smarter than boys because, among other reasons, they are more attentive to their school work. Yet when respondents were questioned about career preferences, most assert that men and women should not do the same work, in part because men are inherently better at certain jobs. Contradictions such as this are found throughout the data; however, respondents do not see their positions as incongruous. Hence, the gendered orientations of individual respondents cannot be placed into a typology (such as: male-dominant or gender-equal). While a respondent may have gender-equal attitudes concerning domestic violence, he may also

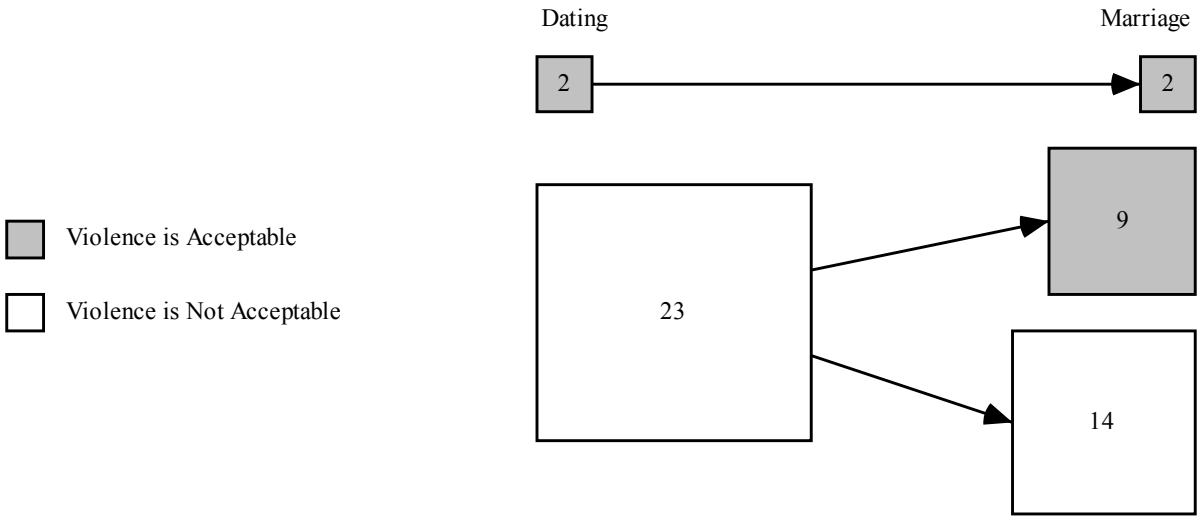
hold strongly male-dominant attitudes about household chores and permission-seeking. Therefore, it is important to note that, although strong patterns were found within each of the three spheres investigated here (domestic violence, chore distribution, and permission-seeking) there was no relationship between spheres at the individual level.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Three distinct groups of respondents emerge out of the data on domestic violence pre- and post marriage.[2] Fourteen respondents consistently reject the use of violence within both dating and marital relationships. A small minority of two respondents condone domestic violence both among dating couples and married couples. The remaining nine respondents' attitudes towards domestic violence are contingent upon marriage; they permit domestic violence within marriage, but never before. These relationships are illustrated in Figure 1 (where numbers inside boxes represent number of respondents). The following discussion categorizes respondents as endorsing one of three general attitudes: Consistent Rejection of Violence, Consistent Acceptance of Violence, and Marriage Contingent Violence.

[2] Three respondents did not discuss domestic violence both before and after marriage and are missing from this section.

Figure 1: Domestic Violence Attitudes Before/After Marriage



Consistent Rejection of Violence

Fourteen respondents agree that domestic violence is not permissible under any circumstance, either within marriage or outside of it. While these respondents have more gender-equal attitudes, their motivations do not stem from a personal or moral conviction against violence. Only one respondent sees a personal benefit to refraining from hitting his wife (he explains that violence would destroy the friendship and the relationship). The remaining respondents cite forces outside of marriage as deterrents against violence. For example, two respondents believe that the police threat is too great: "women are the type that when you touch them a little, they can take you to court" (id 003). Another respondent explains that the Bible does not permit violence against wives, and when asked if Muslims could hit their wives, he asserts that "the Muslims too have a Bible and they all say the same thing" (id 375). In-laws also prove to be significant deterrents; a sub-group of three respondents agree that parents did not want their daughters to be

beaten. One of these respondents addresses in-law concerns and the lack of significance he gives to bridewealth: “her parents can tell you that you didn’t come to buy her so you have no right to hit her” (id 506). Whether through religion, legal consequences, or the respect a husband must show to his in-laws, respondents who believe that men should not hit their wives do so as a result of forces outside the marriage.

Because domestic violence is traditionally sanctioned, this group of respondents may appear more gender-equal than most. However, the majority of respondents in this group still believe men acquire additional power over women through marriage, despite their rejection of violence:

In: When she [disobeys] can I beat her?
Re: No because you have not married her and so she is not under you.
In: So if I have married her can I beat her?
Re: No. Even if you have married here you don’t have the right to beat her. You married her to serve you; you did not marry her to beat [her]. (id 474)

Although this group rejects violence as strategy to control women, they do present other steps men can take when dealing with a ‘misbehaving’ wife: First the man should speak with his wife about her behavior. If she does not comply, he may speak to her parents. Finally, if this is unsuccessful, a he can divorce her. For these respondents, although they do not condone violence, they do anticipate a certain degree of obedience from their wives, and divorce is a ready solution for a ‘misbehaving’ wife.

Consistent Acceptance of Violence

A small minority of respondents (two) believe that domestic violence is acceptable both inside and outside of marriage. These respondents agree that male power over women is imbued through natural sex differences, and not affected by the institution of marriage. Gender distorts their perspectives on strength differences and abilities; they

believe that no matter how big a woman is, "when she does something wrong, the man can beat her" (id 195). Also, when asked whether women could beat men in certain circumstances, the respondents both assert that universally, women do not have the strength to beat men.

Marriage Contingent Violence

This group of nine respondents is unlike those previously discussed; their acceptance of domestic violence is contingent upon marital status. Respondents in this group believe that a man cannot beat his girlfriend because he has 'not given birth to her' nor married her, and therefore has no right to hit her. However, once marriage takes place, respondents' attitudes change:

In: Can I beat [my girlfriend] when she defies my orders?
Re: Please no.
In: Why?
Re: Because you've not married her.
In: Could I have beaten her if we were married?
Re: Please yes.
In: What is the justification?
Re: Because you have paid so much for her to be your wife. (id 349)

This respondent explicitly cites the bridewealth payment as the legitimacy for inter-marital violence; the man 'comes to marry' the woman, and because of this gendered tradition, men assume responsibility and power over their new wives. Respondents in this group also downplay the importance of dating relationships, and thereby maximize the significance of the marital contract. While a girlfriend is considered "just [a] friend" that men do not have "any power over," a wife can be beaten if "she does something [the husband doesn't] like" (id 308, id 187).

Respondents not only present clear delineations of permissible behavior in dating and marriage, but are also careful to explain what types of violence are legitimate, once the marriage has taken place:

Re: If you beat [your wife] you might end up hurting her and sending her to the hospital and the money that will spend to cure her could have been used for something else.
In: Okay, let's take it that I didn't beat her . . . I [just] beat her a little?
Re: Yes [that is acceptable]. (id 002)

Hospital bills were not the only deterrent; this group is also aware of the legal consequences of violence. One respondent, who had witnessed a man's arrest for beating his wife, demonstrates that fear of police can mitigate behavior; he argues that a man can only hit a woman 'a little' so that the police do not become involved.

While one respondent speaks of violence as a natural tendency that needs to be curbed, ultimately, the majority of respondents in this group see moderate violence as a calculated strategy used by men to control the behavior of their wives. Even though men 'come to marry' women, they are still not permitted to do anything they like. As one respondent remarked, "At times you can beat her and at other times too, you cannot beat her" (id 494). This group, akin to the previous groups of respondents, expects obedience from their wives. However, unlike respondents who consistently reject violence, their means of control contain an additional strategy; before opting for divorce, men may attempt to gain obedience through violence. Respondents see this tactic as calculated and controlled, and preferable to divorce:

Re: … You may feel sorry for her so you will just get angry and beat her up, and there are times too, that when you get too angry, you will divorce her by going to present a drink to her family. (traditional means to signify divorce) (id 306)

Women Abusing Men

The three groups of respondents discussed above have interpretations of women's abuse of men that are consistent with the original categorizations. The two respondents who advocate for violence in both dating and marriage believe that women are innately too weak to hit or beat men, again highlighting biological differences between the sexes. Those who hold marriage contingent beliefs assert that women do not 'go to marry' men, and therefore cannot beat them. For this group, bridewealth payments once again substantiate gender inequity.

However, respondents who consistently reject violence do not discredit women's ability to use force; they concede that women, too, can beat their husbands. Yet surprisingly, this group does not blame women for their actions, instead male victims are often laughed at or even blamed for their wives' behavior:

In: Let me ask you: Haven't you ever seen a woman beating up a man before, in this town?
Re: I have seen some in this town.
In: And what do you have to say about that?
Re: Then the fault comes from the man.
In: I don't understand.
Re: It means the man has done something very bad to her.
In: Aah?
Re: Otherwise the woman cannot beat the man like that. It's not nice to see married people fighting like that. It doesn't show enlightenment. (id 002)

These respondents see women's use of violence as an emotional, enraged, response: "Some of the girls, if they are wronged by men, they get angry fast" (id 062). Yet among men, violence is calculated and intended to control. Although this group cites different motivations for male and female perpetrators, respondents who consistently reject violence believe that both male and female victims can report violence to the police, and that male victims should not retaliate against their wives with additional violence.

Changing Norms

These three categories of respondents display only small amounts of gender equity; even those who consistently reject violence in both dating and marriage expect obedience from wives and have strategies to gain it. They do not reject violence out of personal conviction; instead forces outside of marriage act as deterrents. When discussing marital conflict, only one respondent thinks that couples should "sit down and settle the matter amicably" while the vast majority do not envision equal decision-making power in relationships (id 307).

Yet not all the evidence is negative; there is some indication that norms are shifting away from the acceptance of violence:

Re: These days you can't beat somebody's daughter in that manner.
In: Okay, how about if I just hit her, not actually beating her, but just hit her once or twice?
Re: That is also not allowed
In: That is not allowed? What if I have married her?
Re: It is the same: no.
In: Could I do that in the past?
Re: Yes.
In: Even though we were not married?
Re: You couldn't do that in the past.
In: So if we were married, I could do that [in the past]?
Re: Yes. (id 181)

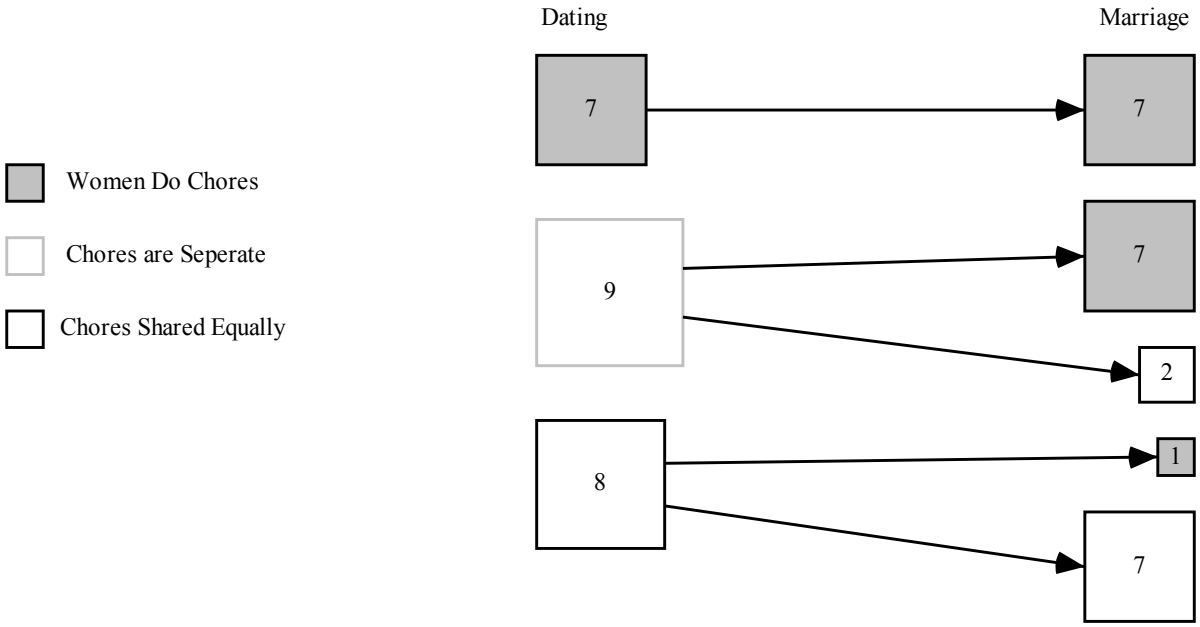
HOUSEHOLD CHORES

As with respondent attitudes towards domestic violence, three distinct perspectives emerge when examining household chores before and after marriage. Out of 24 respondents,[3] seven assert consistently unequal chore distributions; they believe that household chores should be done almost entirely by women, regardless of a couple's

[3] Four respondents did not discuss chore distributions both before and after marriage and are missing from this section.

marital status. The remaining 17 respondents see chores distributions as either separate or equal before marriage. Eight of these respondents alter their stance once marriage takes place, asserting that chores are primarily women's work, while nine endorse an equal distribution of chores in marriage. Therefore respondents hold three different attitudes towards chores: Consistently Unequal Chores, Consistently Equal Chores, and Marriage Contingent Chores (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Chore Attitudes Before/After Marriage



Who Does What?

It is important to note that although house chores are highly gendered, not all chores are alike. From a traditional perspective, men take responsibility for daily money to the household (chop money) and ironing. (Perhaps because irons are considered more complicated appliances, men take ownership over this work.) Chores such as sweeping

and fetching water are often completed by women and children, yet men may help with these chores if their wives are extremely busy or away from the house. However, chores such as cooking and washing laundry remain strictly for women and girls; many wives never receive assistance from their husbands in these areas, and men who do complete these highly feminine chores may suffer teasing and ridicule from peers. As a more traditional respondent explains, chore divisions remain intricate and layered with meaning:

In: Explain it to me, which of the chores are [for] men and which are for women?
Re: Right now … they are married, the ironing, providing money are all to be done by the man and sometimes the man is even supposed to sweep.
In: Sometimes?
Re: Yes.
In: Not always?
Re: Yes.
In: Why?
Re: Maybe the women's work might be too much and so if she is in a hurry to go somewhere, the man has to help her.
In: So that means that whenever the [man does] any work then he is only helping the woman?
Re: Yes.
In: So let's say that the woman has a lot of work to do and she is left with some work to do and she [is] left with the preparing of food for the evening, that one too the man can go and help [her]?
Re: No, that one the woman has to do it herself.
In: Why, still I don't understand, concerning the division of labor. There are certain chores which are for women, is that what you are saying?
Re: Yes.
In: And even with the female chores, there are two types, there are certain kinds that the man can help the woman [with] and there are some that the man [is] not supposed to help? Is that what you are saying?
Re: Yes. (id 047)

Consistently Unequal Chores

Even though the vast majority of Ghanaian couples do not live together prior to marriage, seven respondents believe that girlfriends should do their boyfriend's chores as well as their own. Respondents present a number of strategies to overcome the difficulties

created by separate residences. As one respondent puts it: "when you see her in town, you can tell her that you have … a few dirty clothes so she should come and pick them up and wash them for you" (id 003). Also, a girlfriend is expected to cook meals at her own house to bring to her boyfriend at his residence. Other types of chores require females to make additional time in their day to take care of their boyfriend's needs: "If she is someone who is very hardworking, then when she wakes up, she will come to your place and sweep your house, fetch water for you and also cook for you before she will go to any place she feels like going" (id 002). Respondents carry this unequal division of labor into marriage, and expect women to do the vast majority of household chores for the duration of their marriage. For this group, household chores are indefatigably gendered, and this division of labor supercedes any custom dictated by marriage or bridewealth payments.

Separate vs. Sharing Chores in Dating

Within dating relationships, the remaining 17 respondents are evenly split between promoting an equal chore distribution (we both can help each other with chores) and a separate chore distribution (we should do our own chores). While these two perspectives seem similarly gender-equal in dating, marital outcomes for these groups are quite different. Separate chores in dating appear to be a precursor for an unequal distribution in marriage, while the vast majority of those who agree to an equitable sharing of chores in dating maintain this in marriage. Therefore, the following discussion addresses these two groups: those who consistently share chores, and those who switch from separate chores in dating to female-centered chores in marriage.

Consistently Equal Chore Distribution

Prior to marriage, the majority of respondents in this group see chores as flexible; if girlfriends need help with their house chores, boyfriends may assist, and vice versa. In many ways, these respondents stray from tradition because they do not honor the intricate system of chore-gendering outlined above:

In: So the boys go to the kitchen to help the girls?
Re: Yes.
In: Is that what happens?
Re: Yes.
In: So when the boys get into relationships, they go to help the girls?
Re: Sometimes they help them in cooking.
In: What about washing?
Re: They also help the girls to wash. (id 166)

While more traditional respondents see cooking and washing as specifically female tasks, this group sees chore help as a way of expressing care for their girlfriends.

Once in marriage, this group opts to maintain an equal distribution of housework, and continues to reject that notion that certain chores are too feminine to be done by men. However, while all respondents in this group foresee themselves as completing half the household chores, most consider their labor as only 'helping' their wives. If a man sweeps every day, he is still only assisting his wife with a task that is ultimately her responsibility. Respondent's future actions, therefore, seem more gender-equal than their attitudes; men who do housework are altruistic and kind, yet by no means obligated:

Re: Okay, if the man feels that he doesn't mind sharing the work equally with the woman so that maybe whiles the woman will be cooking, he would be washing the dishes. On the other hand, if he doesn't feel like helping her, then [while] the woman will be cooking, he will be watching TV or gone out to visit a friend or something like that. (id 377)

Although these respondents plan to participate equally in housework, they also believe that because men 'come to marry' women, and not vice versa, men 'can' do housework, while women 'should':

In: … Now that we are married, does it mean that when I [the woman] cook today, he [my husband] is also supposed to cook tomorrow?
Re: No, for this one, he came to marry you so he can help you but you don't have to fight over the work with him. You being the woman should do the work.
.
.
.
In: He can help me if he wants to?
Re: Yes.
In: But if he doesn't want to, I have no say?
Re: No, you can let him help you.
In: But I can't force him?
Re: No. (id 295)

Only the most gender-equal respondents in this group think men may do housework when their wives are not simultaneously working. This arrangement counters the notion of men as 'helpers,' and can bring negative social consequences. One respondent acts out a conflict that could easily take place in his future household:

In: … Are you not shy that your friends will come and see you, the man, in the kitchen whilst the woman is watching tele?
Re: No please.
In: The woman is in there watching tele?
Re: No.
In: But the woman's mother comes to see the man in the kitchen and the woman is watching tele?
Re: She will insult the woman because she will tell her that … "it is your duty to be in the kitchen. You are watching tele and the man is in the kitchen."
In: Then you will answer for the woman [that] it is also [the man's] duty to go to the kitchen, is that not it?
.
.
.
Re: Like, I will answer that way for her, but maybe the woman is sick …
In: No, no this is not a sickness matter. We are talking about the fact that it is a woman's job or a man's job.
Re: As for that we are the same.
In: So I should be able to answer my mother-in-law.
Re: Yes. (id 182)

Marriage Contingent Chore Distribution

Nine respondents advocate for a clear transition in chore distributions from dating relationships to marriage. The majority of these respondents believe that prior to

marriage, chores should not be shared in any way that resembles a marital relationship, because the marriage transaction has not taken place:

In: Okay so after entering into the relationship, how do we share the work you do at home?
Re: Does the girl and boy live in the same house?
In: No, they do not live in the same house, they are just boyfriend and girlfriend.
Re: Eeh, then what kinds of work are you talking about?
In: Like sweeping and cooking in their various houses, are they going to do their various work themselves?
Re: Yes if the girl comes from his house, her mother will say she doesn't like that so she won't even allow her to go to his house.
In: Even to visit him?
Re: If she comes just to visit him.
In: Hmm?
Re: Then that is fine but not to maybe washes his things or cook for him or something.
In: [Her] mother will not like it?
Re: Yes she will not like it.
In: Oh is that so?
Re: Yes.
In: Why?
Re: Because you've not married her so at certain age, you should find a lady to come and introduce to your family before she can come to your house to that kind of things. (id 187)

Respondents also down play the importance of dating relationships in order to substantiate a separate chore distribution: "If you take a girlfriend, it [is] not as if you will live with her till you marry, by all means, she will leave [your house]. So when she leaves, you will have to do your own cooking, washing and the like" (id 375).

However, once marriage occurs, these respondents believe that wives are responsible for virtually all the housework, while men can offer a token amount of assistance:

Re: Since you are married, there isn't any work to be shared; everything would have to be done by the woman. Since it's the man who married the woman, then when she wakes up from bed, if there is sweeping to be done, she has to do it, cooking, likewise, she has to do virtually everything. If is only if the man wants to help that

he can pick up a broom and sweep the room and also when the woman is sick and there is nobody to do it, then he will do it. (id 450)

Housework and the Female Identity

Both respondents who endorse a consistently unequal chore distribution and those who have marriage contingent beliefs reflect a traditional division of household labor within marriage; women complete the vast majority of work. These groups also think of housework as a vital element of female identity for which women have a high prowess and men are incapable. In some instances respondents attribute this to their childhood training:

In: Okay, so if he loves the girl, why can't he cook for the girl?
Re: Maybe the man does not know how to cook because it could be that he wasn't going to the kitchen when he was a kid, so he has to allow somebody to cook for him. (id 047)

In other instances, these traditional respondents explain that boys either intentionally evade learning the housekeeping skills in order to avoid work, or by nature of their gender, do not have the capacity to learn housekeeping skills:

In: … Can the girl go to the boy's house and cook for him and wash his clothes and do all the basic household chores for him?
Re: Yes.
In: … Can the boy also go to the girl's house and wash her things and clean the house?
Re: He can't do it.
In: Why can't he do that? Don't you see it as cheating?
Re: Yes it is.
In: … But why can't the boy do that?
Re: Maybe he wasn't taught.
In: Aah, you mean it may be because he wasn't taught how to do things that way?
Re: Yes.
In: But why do you think that people do not teach their sons that way? Knowing that it's a cheat, why is that so?
Re: Maybe when they teach them, they don't take it. (id 475)

Not only do these respondents believe that women complete the chores better, but more traditional respondents also agree that women consider housework to be a personal duty, and that wives would interpret assistance for their husbands as a mark of their own incompetence: "I can't [cook] because if I go and do it, she might get offended as to why I don't allow her to cook" (id 003). As one respondent put it, "some women know what they are supposed to do":

> Re: Some women know what they are supposed to do so you don't need to share the work with her, she can cook wash your things, fetch water, and do everything … so by the time you close from work, [s]he would have washed your [clothing], ironed your things, and … set the table for you to come and eat. After eating, she will prepare water for you to take your bath. (id 002)

In contrast, respondents who assert consistently equal chore sharing do not consider good housework skills to be essentially female. This respondent sees many types of women who prefer a variety of different chore distributions in their households:

> Re: There are some girls when you marry them they are beautiful but they don't know how to do anything, and there are some who have been taught by their parents so when you marry them she can cook and do everything else. There are some girls too when you marry them they would ask their husbands to cook with them or else they would not do it. There are others too when you marry them they would ask their husbands to sit down and they would bring the food and they would do it. (id 490)

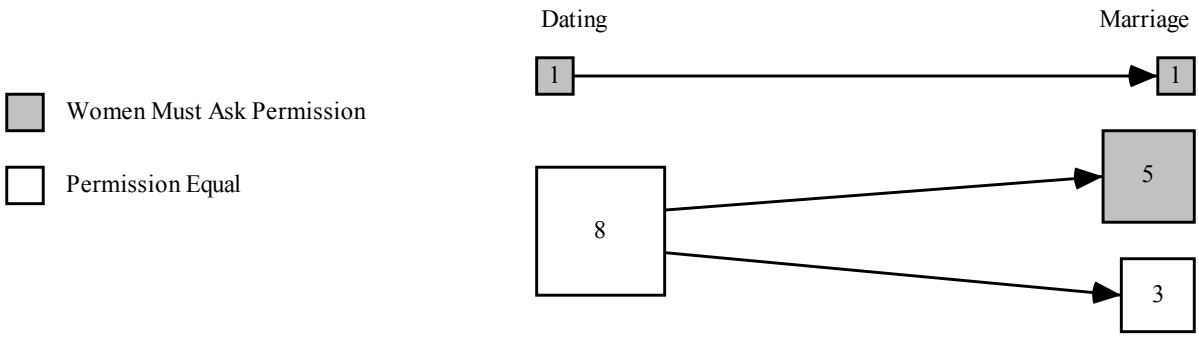
PERMISSION-SEEKING

As with domestic violence and chore distributions, among these respondents three types of attitudes towards permission-seeking are present.[4] Out of nine respondents,[5] one believes that women must ask for permission to travel from their boyfriends and husbands, while men are not required to do the same. The remaining eight respondents hold a more gender-equal position prior to marriage, agreeing to one of two positions:

[4] Permission-seeking should be distinguished from simply informing a spouse of upcoming travel.
[5] Only nine respondents discussed permission-seeking both before and after marriage.

both boyfriends and girlfriends do not need permission to travel, or both boyfriends and girlfriends should ask their partner for permission. Five of these respondents shift positions with marriage, asserting that wives need permission from their husbands to travel, above and beyond what husbands need from their wives. Only three respondents think that women and men should ask equally for permission both before and after marriage. Therefore, three attitudes emerge: Consistently Unequal Permission-Seeking, Consistently Equal Permission-Seeking, and Marriage Contingent Permission-Seeking (See Figure 3).

Figure 3: Permission-Seeking Attitudes Before/After Marriage



Consistently Unequal Permission-Seeking

Only one respondent asserts that permission-seeking before marriage is gender-unequal; he believes that men are inherently more powerful than women (marriage or not) and that women are always required to ask for permission while men are not:

In: ... She tells me she is going to do something in Accra.
Re: [pause] You can tell her not to go because men have more power than the women.
In: Where is that power from?
Re: Hmmm, it has always been there.

In: You can tell me whether you learnt it from the school, television, or anywhere?
Re: We see it happening around, in town.
In: [In] town, what shows that this one has more power than the other?
Re: Sometimes when a woman wants to go somewhere and she informs her boyfriend and the boyfriend says she shouldn't go, sometimes the woman doesn't go. The moment the woman goes, the boyfriend will get angry and sometimes [it] can lead to the breaking of their friendship. And the boy will say he doesn't like her again. (id 047)

Marriage Contingent Permission-Seeking

This group of five respondents believes that in dating relationships men don't have the power to restrain women from traveling because they have yet not married. However, these respondents agree that although boyfriends cannot force girlfriends not travel, they can break up with such women because they are disobedient; dating behavior is considered a precursor for marital behavior.

However, with marriage respondents' intention to control their partners becomes more blatant: For this respondent, a wife who travels without permission from her husband is susceptible to physical abuse, simply because the bridewealth payment has been made:

In: So as we are not married, do I have the right to say no?
Re: The woman knows that she is your girlfriend so [you will] agree at all cost.
In: Hmm . . . [what about] when she asks and I tell her not to go?
Re: If you say she shouldn't go, she can choose to go and not to go because you have not married her.
In: Can I beat her when she defies my orders?
Re: Please no.
In: Why?
Re: Because you have not married her.
In: Could I have beaten her if we were married?
Re: Please yes.
In: What is the justification?
Re: Because you have paid so much for her to be your wife. (id 349)

The marital process also translates into a lack of consequences for husband's disobedience; wives cannot do anything to their husbands who travel without permission: "The reason why the man can go without permission is that he married the woman and not vice versa so whereas the man can go somewhere with authority, the woman cannot do likewise" (id 450).

While prior to marriage, these respondents defend the importance of women's parents, agreeing that women in dating relationships must always be permitted to travel to see family, regardless of the boyfriend. However, after marriage, a woman's husband gains greater authority (and priority) than her parents:

In: So if she wants to go and visit her parents, does she have to inform me or she has to ask permission?
Re: [pause].
In: Mind you, we are no married?
Re: She can just inform him.
In: She doesn't have to ask permission?
Re: No.
In: Why?
Re: Because I don't know what she is going to do with her mother.
In: What about if we were married, would there be a need to ask permission?
Re: She has to ask permission.
In: But is it not the same mother that she is going to see?
Re: If she asks permission and I tell her not to go, I may have a reason for doing so because it may be that I will also be visiting my parents the next day. (id 003)

This respondent makes it clear that power over a woman is passed from a father to a husband with marriage, at which point in time, the woman is "under" the man:

Re: Okay, since you are friends she can tell you that she is going. She will not ask you permission because since you are not married, she is not under you. But if you have married then she is under you so she can ask for permission. [If you are her boyfriend,] you are not her father for her to come and ask you if she can go somewhere or not. But, you are friends so she can come and tell you that she is going to see her father. (id 474)

Some respondents, however, did not see the primary purpose of women's permission seeking to be an attempt to control behavior. Instead they considered themselves to be primarily responsible for the wellbeing of their wives and girlfriends, and did not want to be blamed by the family and larger community is something happened to the woman while she traveled: "You have not married her nor performed any customary rite so you cannot prevent her from going to visit her parents. If she even follows you to church and something happens to her … you will be blamed for everything" (id 483).

Consistently Equal Permission-Seeking

For the three respondents who maintain equal permission-seeking for men and women both inside and outside of marriage, the specific dynamics of the situation play a large role in the respondents' attitudes. For one respondent, while both husbands and wives did not need permission to travel to see their parents, if a woman were to go somewhere she could "hurt herself" (such as visiting friends in another town) then permission was needed (id 047). Similarly, if husband wanted to travel to for a party, he must ask permission. However, traces of gender inequality still exist in this group; although respondents believe permission-seeking should be equal between men and women, one respondent finally concedes that "sometimes when the man says something the woman has to obey but it's not necessary for the man to obey all that the woman says" (id 047).

When presented with scenarios where husband and wives have conflicting interests over how and where to spend time, respondents agree that each person can travel where he or she would like. However, as one respondent notes, over time this strategy

would bring serious "misunderstanding" to the couple (id 295). To resolve this type of power struggle, one respondent suggests that both husbands and wives could take their partner to his or her father to be reprimanded, or one of the spouses could divorce the other. Another respondent suggests that both husbands and wives can beat their spouses if they don't obey. Although these strategies are gender neutral (wives are given the same means of control as husbands) none present a gender-equal problem solving approach. Only one respondent suggests that partners who both want to travel to different places with their spouse "should come to a compromise and postpone one [of the trips]" (id 506). Even though respondents strive for gender equality in their responses, possibly for lack adult role modeling, most fail to envision a decision-making process that empowers both men and women.

DISCUSSION

Despite the purposive nature of the sample (respondents were hand-picked to reflect a breadth of attitudes) these findings provide evidence that at least some patriarchal gender roles can be expected to persist in marriage relationships in Ghana as this generation ages. Although the large majority of respondents think that girls and boys are equal at younger ages, when discussing adult gender roles, respondents' attitudes become significantly more male-dominant. Perhaps, as boys receive additional socialization into manhood, gender-equal beliefs are increasingly discouraged, causing egalitarian respondents to shift closer towards male-dominant beliefs. The youth and inexperience of respondents suggests these findings are even an underestimation of male-

dominance, which might grow stronger as respondents more fully experience the benefits afforded to them through patriarchy.

Also, a distinct transition in attitudes occurs between dating and marriage. Although the majority of respondents hold gender-equal beliefs in dating relationships, the majority of respondents also assert male-dominant attitudes after marriage. Nearly half of the gender-equal attitudes in dating relationships expressed in these interviews (concerning domestic violence, chore distributions, and permission-seeking) transform into male-dominant attitudes with the onset of marriage. Much of this reallocation of power to husbands after marriage can be attributed to bridewealth payments and the marital process, which many respondents see as imbuing men with additional power over women. It is evident that in marriage women are more likely to suffer from domestic violence from their partner, are less likely to have equitable chore distributions with husbands in the household, and are more frequently expected to ask permission from their husbands to go about their daily activities, such as visiting parents and friends. As long as bridewealth payments substantiate unequal power in marriage, it is unlikely that recent educational and economic gains for women and girls in Ghana will directly translate into improved gender equity in households and among married couples.

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Appendix 1: Coding Tree

(1) live with
- (1 1) adults in house
- (1 2) children in house

(2) parent employment
- (2 1) father's employment
  - (2 1 1) high status
  - (2 1 2) low status
- (2 2) mother's employment
  - (2 2 1) high status
  - (2 2 2) low status

(3) domestic violence
- (3 1) never
- (3 3) acceptable in marriage
- (3 4) acceptable in non-marriage

(4) chores
- (4 1) children's chores
  - (4 1 1) egalitarian division
  - (4 1 2) patriarchal division
- (4 2) parent's chores
  - (4 2 1) egalitarian division
  - (4 2 2) patriarchal division

(6)[6] socialization influences
- (6 1) within family
- (6 2) outside family

(7) friends
- (7 1) gender of friends
  - (7 1 1) male/female friends
  - (7 1 2) only male friends
- (7 4) good friend qualities
- (7 6) friends cross gender roles
- (7 7) sex

(8) self-esteem
- (8 1) what respondent is good at
  - (8 1 1) sports
  - (8 1 2) school
- (8 2) what respondent wants as career
  - (8 2 1) ambitious choice
  - (8 2 2) practical choice
- (8 3) opposite gender career
  - (8 3 1) same as male career
  - (8 3 2) different from male

(9) boys and girls

[6] Tree nodes (5), (7 3), (7 5), (9 2), (9 5), (12 4), (12 5), (12 12), (13 1), (13 2), (13 4), (13 10), (14), and (16 2 7) were deleted early in the coding process to streamline analysis.

(9 1) similarities and differences
(9 1 1) physical differences
(9 1 1 1) boys/girls equal
(9 1 1 2) boys stronger qualified
(9 1 1 3) boys stronger absolute
(9 1 2) mental differences
(9 1 2 1) boys/girls equal
(9 1 2 2) girls smarter
(9 1 2 3) boys smarter qualified
(9 1 2 4) boys smarter absolute
(9 1 3) social differences
(9 1 3 1) good quality to girl
(9 1 3 2) good quality to boy
(9 3) bad girls
(9 5) bad boys
(10) men/women division of labor
(10 1) no gender difference
(10 2) gender difference
(11) gift giving
(12) girlfriends and boyfriends
(12 1) what boys look for
(12 2) what girls look for
(12 3) who approaches whom
(12 6) boyfriend/girlfriend chores
(12 6 1) separate chores
(12 6 2) patriarchal chore distribution
(12 6 3) equal distribution
(12 7) young adult similarities and differences
(12 8) seeking permission vs. informing
(12 8 1) egalitarian response
(12 8 2) patriarchal response
(12 9) sex
(12 11) pregnancy
(12 13) sending
(13) marriage dynamics
(13 3) husband/wife chores
(13 3 1) egalitarian chore distribution
(13 3 2) patriarchal chore distribution
(13 5) seeking permission vs. informing
(13 5 1) egalitarian response
(13 5 2) patriarchal response
(13 6) sex
(13 6 1) egalitarian response
(13 6 2) patriarchal response
(13 7) fertility, child bearing, and 2nd wife
(13 8) money together or separate

(13 8 1) separate
(13 8 2) together
(13 9) who has the power?
(13 9 1) egalitarian response
(13 9 2) patriarchal response
(13 11) woman/man changing work
(13 11 1) no permission needed
(13 11 2) permission needed for woman
(13 11 3) permission needed for both
(13 12) family planning
(13 12 1) woman responsibility
(13 12 2) male responsibility
(13 12 3) both responsible
(13 12 4) doesn't know what it is
(13 12 5) practicing in secret
(13 13) chop money
(15) marriage rites process
(16) demographics
(16 1) age
(16 1 1) 12
(16 1 2) 13
(16 1 3) 14
(16 1 4) 15
(16 2) ethnicity
(16 2 1) Akwapim
(16 2 2) Agona
(16 2 3) Guan
(16 2 4) multiple
(16 2 5) the north
(16 2 6) Akropong
(16 2 8) Asante
(16 3) inheritance
(16 3 1) matrilineal
(16 3 2) patrilineal
(16 3 3) unclear/not sure
(16 3 4) combination
(16 4) religion
(16 4 1) Presbyterian
(16 4 2) Methodist
(16 4 3) Assembly of God
(16 4 4) Anglican
(16 4 5) House of Praise