

**SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE:  
ATTITUDES TOWARD MARRIAGE AT OLDER AGES**

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**ABSTRACT**

Understanding attitudes toward marriage at older ages is increasingly important as young adults delay marriage and large numbers of people return to the marriage market after divorce. This study examines age differences in the desire to marry among singles 18-69 years old, taking into account selection into marriage. Using multinomial regressions on data drawn from the General Social Survey (GSS), we find that single men and women age 55 - 69 have less desire to marry than younger singles. This age difference in single's desire to marry is not explained by demographic characteristics, personal attributes, or marital history. The expected gain from marriage, as measured by education, increases the overall desire to marry, but it too does not account for the age difference in the desire to marry.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The marriage script has changed in recent decades. American men and women no longer marry in their early twenties and stay married until death do they part, never to enter the marriage market again. Not only are they delaying marriage more than ever before in the past century (DaVanzo and Rahman 1993; Fitch and Ruggles 2000), but more than half of men and women will divorce at least once, and fewer of them are remarrying (Cherlin 1992; Bumpass, Sweet, and Martin 1990; Wilson and Clarke 1992). Thus, fully one-third of individuals 35-44 years old are currently single (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1998), either because they have never married, or are on the other end of marriage.

While we know that young adults still report a strong desire to marry (Thornton and Young-De-Marco 2001), what about the desire to marry among older adults? Marriage at older ages may be even more important than marriage at younger ages, as having a spouse has been found to be important for health, physical functioning, and financial well-being (Waite and Gallagher 2000, Hughes and Waite 2002), all of which become more salient as one ages. However, the decision to marry at older ages is also often more complicated than it is at earlier ages, in terms of the merging of finances, careers, children, and lifestyles. In short, the calculus of the gain to marriage changes along the life course and becomes more complex.

Unfortunately, understanding marital attitudes at older ages has been limited by a lack of data. For example, the National Survey of Families and Households included an extensive set of questions about marital attitudes in the (NSFH) (c.f South 1991, 1992, 1993; Bulcroft and Bulcroft 1993; Oropesa 1996; Trent and South 1992), but did not ask these questions of singles

over the age of 35 in either the 1987/1988 or the 1992/1994 waves. Other studies of marital attitudes have examined trends over time and compared cohorts, but have not analyzed the effect of age on marital attitudes in any detail, nor have they analyzed the attitudes of those who are single separately from those who are married (c.f. Axinn and Thornton 2000; Glenn 1996; Thornton 1989; Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001). Some of these studies have used panel data, but they have been limited by the fact that these studies have not collected marital attitude data on participants beyond their late 30s, such as High School and Beyond, the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972, or the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88). Thus, we still know relatively little about the attitudes toward marriage among singles in their later 30's, 40's, and 50's, and 60's and how they compare to attitudes of singles in their 20's. This paper uses the General Social Survey (GSS) to examine age differences in attitudes toward marriage among men and women from 18 to 69 years of age and whether these can be accounted for by differences in the gain to marriage at older ages.

Attitudes toward marriage are important because they are linked to actual marital behavior (Sassler and Schoen 1999; Thornton 1991). Thus, understanding age differences in attitudes toward marriage can provide important insights into current trends in marriage, such as why the probability of marriage and remarriage declines with age (Cherlin 1992; Bumpass, Sweet, and Martin 1990; Wilson and Clarke 1992). It will also provide new insight into future trends, such as whether the rising numbers of people who are delaying marriage would still like to marry or whether they are rejecting marriage altogether. These are important questions given the impact of marriage on the financial, physical, and emotional well-being of both men and women (Horwitz, et al. 1996; Ross 1995; Waite 1995; Waite and Gallagher 2000).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since the economic approach to marriage behavior was first introduced in the 1970s by Becker and colleagues (Becker 1981; Becker, Landes, and Michael 1977), research on marriage has predominantly taken a “marriage market” perspective, in which the decision to marry is seen as a rational choice that individuals make in order to optimize their utility, based on the perceived costs and benefits of the potential match (c.f. Becker 1981; Becker, Landes, and Michael 1977; England and Farkas 1986). Studies of marital attitudes have focused on young adults, however, and have not considered the ways in which the gain to marriage are likely to change with age.

### *Financial benefits*

Perhaps the most commonly analyzed gain from marriage is the financial gain, which may actually increase in importance as one nears retirement age. One financial gain from marriage stems from the fact that finances are typically pooled within the family and consumption is more efficient because of economies of scale. But marriages also serve as an insurance and a risk-pooling arrangement. As such, the gain from marriage as an insurance increases with age because risks increase with age (Kotlikoff and Spivak 1981). However, financial insurances can be obtained outside the family, for example by social security, pensions and public annuities. Moreover, in certain cases, access to these insurances may be linked with remaining single, thus substantially reducing the gain from marriage. For example, widows may not be eligible for their husbands’ pensions if they remarry, so they have an incentive to remain unmarried unless the new husband can provide a better income than the pension. Thus, even

though the gain from marriage increases with age, this gain may be eliminated under certain conditions.

Older singles are also likely to have more personal resources (education, employment, income) and may thus expect higher gain from marriage because they are attractive mates and may expect to find high quality spouses (Goldstein and Kenney 2001; Oppenheimer 1994; Oppenheimer and Lew 1995). This higher expected gain from marriage may make marriage more desirable. For example, several studies have found that women with more education are now more likely to marry than those with less education (Goldstein and Kenney 2001; Okun 2001; Bracher and Santow 1998).

Economic theories of marriage timing suggest that full-time employment, especially for men, is a good predictor of readiness for marriage (Anderson 1990; Lloyd and South 1996; Oppenheimer, Kalmijn, and Lim 1997; Wilson 1987). Despite changing gender role attitudes, men are still seen as primarily responsible for the economic welfare of the family, and thus the transition to marriage is mainly contingent on men's economic resources (Easterlin 1980; Oppenheimer, Kalmijn and Lin 1997). Indeed, Clarkberg (1999) found that high earnings are much more important for men's transition to marriage than in their transition to cohabitation. Nonetheless, women's employment may also facilitate the transition to marriage, especially when the potential spouse's income is insufficient to maintain an independent household (Oppenheimer 1997). Thus, we would expect that full-time employment may affect the desire to marry among singles, and may account for age differences in the desire to marry.

*Help with children*

Certainly, one gain from marriage is having two parents to help raise children. Older singles are more likely to have children, either from a previous marriage or from a previous non-marital relationship. Parenthood may also be associated with the desire to marry, but again the relationship is complex. On one hand, people with children may seek the economic and emotional support of a spouse who may share parental responsibilities (Smock 1990). This benefit of marriage, on the other hand, may be diminished by the fact that children also introduce complications in forming new families (Cherlin 1978; Rodgers and Conrad 1986). Moreover, parents of young children may seek the support of a new partner, but older singles, who are more likely to be parents of grown children, may have an incentive to remain unmarried and in full control of their property. In addition, older children may voice opposition to their parent remarrying in order to ensure their inheritance.

### *Religious gains*

To the extent that most religions promote marriage and relatively traditional lifestyles (Bearman and Bruckner 2001; Laumann et al. 1994; Thornton 1985b), we would expect people with greater religious participation to have more positive attitudes toward marriage. Moreover, differences in religiosity by age may also account for differences in the desire to marry, by age. Indeed, studies have shown that single women tend to become more religiously involved as they age (Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy, and Waite 1995). Moreover, for women in their 30s, religious participation actually increases with divorce and parenthood (Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy, and Waite 1995). Thus, we would expect people with more religious involvement to have a greater desire to marry, and this may help explain age differences in the desire to marry.

### *The impact of previous experiences*

Experiencing the divorce of one's parents, or having ever been divorced oneself, is likely to affect the perceived gain from marriage, and may also explain age differences in the desire to marry. For example, young people are less likely to have been divorced than older people. At the same time, younger people are more likely to have experienced the divorce of their parents. Numerous studies have shown that individuals who experienced parental divorce have less positive attitudes toward marriage; the conflict and turmoil surrounding divorce leads children of divorce to harbor negative attitudes toward marriage and to hold more positive attitudes toward singlehood and other alternatives to marriage (Amato 1988; Axinn and Thornton 1996; Thornton 1985a, 1991; Trent and South 1992).

Studies have also shown that attitudes towards marriage are affected by having ever been divorced, but these studies have produced contradictory findings. On the one hand, Axinn and Thornton (1996) found that people who had divorced were less likely to believe that married people were happier or that it is better to get married than to remain single. At the same time, Hopper (2001) found that most people who divorce uphold the ideal of marriage; fault was found with their own particular situations. Therefore, it is difficult to formulate a clear hypothesis regarding the effect of one's own experience of divorce on the desire to marry.

### **DATA AND METHODS**

The data for this study are drawn from the General Social Survey (GSS), a cross-sectional, national probability sample of individuals, ages 18 to 89 in U.S. households, that has been conducted either annually or biannually since 1973. The GSS includes a set of core demographic questions such as age, gender and race/ethnicity, indicators of current education



and employment as well as a question on the desire to marry. For the purposes of this study, we limit our sample to heterosexual (defined as not having any same-sex partners in the last 5 years) individuals ages 18-69, resulting in a sample of 3078 individuals.

### ***Dependent Variable***

Our dependent variable is the desire to marry. In 1996 and 1998, single men and women were asked “If the right person came along, would you like to be married?” The response categories for this question were “Yes” (coded as 1) and “No” (coded as 0). The advantage of the GSS over other datasets is that it asked this question of singles over a wide age range, rather than focusing only on young singles (as does the NSFH, for example). But the disadvantage is that this particular question was only asked of people who were not in a steady romantic relationship at the time of the survey. Therefore, in our analyses we use the response to the question on the desire to marry to distinguish between four groups: 1) singles with no desire to marry; 2) singles with a desire to marry; 3) singles in a steady romantic relationship; and 4) people who are married. This is our dependent variable in our multinomial analyses.

### ***Independent Variables***

#### ***Basic demographic characteristics***

Age is the main explanatory variable of interest in this study. We measured it as a set of dummy variables: age 18 – 24 (omitted from regressions), 25 – 34, 35 – 44, 45 – 54, and 55 – 69. We expect men and women to differ in their desire to marry, and we include a dummy variable in the analysis, indicating whether the respondent is male. We also tested for interactions between age and gender, to see whether age effects differ for men and women, but these effects

were statistically insignificant and are not included in the final analyses. We include a set of three dummy variables indicating respondent's race: Non-Hispanic White (omitted category), Non-Hispanic African-American, and Hispanic. Unfortunately, because there were too few cases we could not include members of other racial and ethnic groups, nor could we further refine the Hispanic category.

After examining the effect of basic demographic attributes on the desire to marry, we examine the effect of potential financial gains, having children, religious participation, and experience of parental divorce and one's own divorce on the desire to marry. Potential financial gains was measured by employment status and education. We include a set of dummy variables measuring work status: not employed (reference category), employed part time, and employed full time. We expect that full-time employment signifies maturity and readiness for marriage as well as an expectation of high gain from marriage. We interpret education as a measure of both socioeconomic status and earnings potential, and it is coded into four categories: no high school degree (reference category), high school degree, some college (includes Associates degree, junior college, and those who completed some college but did not have a college degree), and college degree. To account for people currently enrolled in school, we include a dummy variable scored '0' for not currently enrolled and '1' for currently enrolled. As with employment, we regard education as a sign of readiness for marriage, and school enrollment as a sign the respondent is not yet ready for marriage.

We also include dummy variables indicating whether the respondent has any children, whether the respondent grew up in an intact family (at age 16), and whether the respondent had ever been divorced. And finally we include a measure of religious participation, *church*

*attendance* which is a dummy variable scored ‘0’ for those who attend religious services a few times a month or less, and ‘1’ for those who attend religious services about once a week or more.

### ***Analytic Strategy***

In this analysis we focus on age differences in single people’s desire to marry, while controlling for the selection of people into marriage. We start with a simple model that examines the effect of age while controlling for basic demographic characteristics such as gender and race/ethnicity. We ask whether there are age differences in the desire to marry, and whether these differences may be explained by basic demographic characteristics. These basic demographic characteristics might affect selection into marriage and therefore might affect the age differences we observe in the desire to marry. Next, we examine factors that might affect the potential gain from marriage during the life course, and we ask whether they account for age differences in the desire to marry.

Any study of age differences in the desire to marry must take into account selection effects, whereby people who desire to marry do so, and are selected out of the pool of singles at older ages. Thus, people with no desire to marry will be overrepresented among singles at older ages. Yet, the question of desire to marry is only applicable to the unmarried. This raises a methodological challenge. It is necessary to account for selection into marriage while examining the effect of age on the desire to marry among unmarried people. We offer a simple and straightforward methodological solution to this problem. We estimate multinomial regressions, where we contrast 1) being single with no desire to marry with 2) being single with a desire to marry, 3) being in a steady relationship, and 4) being married. Though our main interest lies in the first contrast, being single with no desire to marry vs. being single with desire to marry, by

simultaneously estimating the other two contrasts and including the entire population in our estimations, we account for the selection into marriage. Indeed, other more sophisticated techniques are available for correcting for selection bias, but they tend to require the data to be nested (our data are not nested) or they are based upon strong assumptions about the data.

## **RESULTS**

Figure 1 shows the age distribution by the desire to marry. The findings show an interesting non-linear pattern. The youngest and the oldest age groups have the highest representation in the ‘single with no desire to marry’ category, compared to a stable representation among all the other age groups. About three to four percent of adults ages 25 to 54 are single with no desire to marry, but about seven percent of the youngest group (age 18 – 24) and over ten percent of the oldest group (age 55-69) are single with no desire to marry.

Not surprisingly, as age increases, a higher percentage of people are married, reflecting the selection of people into marriage. The greatest distinction is between the youngest age group (18-24) with only a third married, compared to the following age group (25 – 34) with 65% married. This process is mirrored in the decline in the percentage of people in steady romantic relationships, by age. The age distribution presented in Figure 1 reflects a process of selection, whereby steady romantic relationships turn into marriages and people who desire to marry eventually marry.

- Figure 1 about here -

The percentage distributions of the independent variables used in the regression analyses are presented in Table 1. The sample is composed of a majority of women (54%), and women are over-represented in the group of single people with no desire to marry. Whites are over-

represented among the married, and African-Americans are over-represented among those in a steady romantic relationship (unmarried).

Overall, the great majority of respondents grew up in an intact family (86%), but this group is under-represented among people in steady romantic relationships. This may reflect an overall delay in marriage of people who grew up in single-parent families.

About 30% of the sample had ever been divorced, and this group is over-represented among those with no desire to marry (52%). This finding suggests that there may be a negative relationship between having ever been divorced and the desire to marry, so that having an unsuccessful marriage in the past may reduce the desire to marry in the future.

Full-time employment also seems to be related to the desire to marry, as a higher percentage of single people with a desire to marry are employed full-time (almost 70%) compared to single people with no desire to marry (almost 50%). Full-time employment may signal a readiness for marriage, and may also make people desirable mates for marriage. Similarly, having a college education increases a person's readiness for marriage and the expected gain from marriage. College graduates are over-represented among the married and they are under-represented among those with no desire to marry. School enrollment may affect marriage timing as people tend to marry upon completion of their schooling (Blossfed and Hunik 1991). Indeed, less than one percent of married people in the sample were enrolled in school at the time of the survey compared to 5 – 6% of single people.

Married people are over-represented among those attending church, and those who are unmarried but in steady romantic relationships are under-represented. This may reflect a change in behavior, whereby people increase their church attendance after marriage, but it may also

reflect differences in religiosity of people in steady romantic relationships compared to people in marriages.

There are some differences in locality between the groups. Married people are over-represented in the South and under-represented in urban areas, perhaps reflecting differences in attitudes towards marriage in different geographic areas.

- Table 1 about here -

The findings in Table 1 suggest relationships between individuals' attributes and their desire to marry, but multivariate analyses are necessary to estimate the effect of these attributes on the desire to marry, net of the other variables in the equation. Tables 2 and 3 show results of multinomial regressions. Column 1 in Table 2 is the contrast of interest, and shows the odds of being single with a desire to marry vs. being single with no desire to marry. The most important finding here is that single people in the oldest age category, age 55 – 69, have lower odds of desiring to marry vs. not desiring to marry compared to people in the youngest age category (18 – 24).

Interactions of age with gender (not shown) were not statistically significant, suggesting that this age effect does not differ for men and women. Interestingly, single men have higher odds of desiring to marry compared to single women, net of the other variables in the equation. However, this gender effect disappears when controlling for other factors, in Table 3. Single Hispanics seem to have lower odds of desiring to marry vs. not desiring to marry, but this effect is not robust, and it disappears when controlling for other personal attributes, in Table 3. The interaction between race and gender (not shown) on the odds of being single with a desire to marry vs. no desire to marry is not statistically significant.

Column 2 in Table 2 shows the odds of being in a steady romantic relationship vs. being single with no desire to marry. Although our main interest is in column 1, Columns 2 and 3 shed light on the process of selection into marriage. For example, older people (age 45- 54 and 55 – 69) have lower odds of being in a steady romantic relationship vs. being single with no desire to marry, compared to people age 18 – 24. Column 3 shows the odds of being married vs. being single with no desire to marry. People aged 25 – 34, 35 – 44, and 45 – 54 all have higher odds than the youngest people, aged 18 – 24 to be married vs. single with no desire to marry, reflecting the age selection into marriage of those who desire marriage. Men have higher odds than women of being married vs. single with no desire to marry, and African Americans have lower odds than whites of being married vs. single with no desire to marry. These effects remain intact even when controlling for other individual attributes, in Table 3.

- Table 2 about here -

Table 3 shows multinomial regression coefficients of individual attributes. Column 1 again shows the odds of being single and desiring to marry vs. being single with no desire to marry. Again, people in the oldest age category (55 – 69) have lower odds than people in the youngest category (18 – 24) to desire to marry vs. not desire to marry. Age is the only basic demographic variable to retain its effect, in comparison to Table 2. This finding suggests that the age difference in the desire to marry is not explained by previous experiences with divorce and that employment and education do not account for the decline in the perceived gain from marriage at older ages.

Having any children, however, reduces the odds of being single with a desire to marry vs. being single with no desire to marry. This finding supports the hypothesis that parents expect a

conflict between their children and a new marriage partner. This finding does not support the hypothesis that parents are searching for a partner to help raise their child.

The expected gain from marriage has a statistically significant effect on the desire to marry, but only in the form of education. The effect of full-time employment on the desire to marry among singles is not statistically significant. Having a college education, and even a completed high school degree, increase the odds of being single with a desire to marry vs. being single with no desire to marry, and these effects are statistically significant. This finding is consistent with the perspective that people with more personal resources expect to gain from marriage and therefore see marriage as desirable (Goldstein and Kenney 2001; Oppenheimer 1994; Oppenheimer and Lew 1995). This finding also suggests that having completed an educational degree, either high school or college is a signal of readiness for marriage. But again, these measures of the gain from marriage do not account for the age differences in the desire to marry.

Column 2 of Table 3 shows the odds of being in a steady romantic relationship vs. being single with no desire to marry. The results for the demographic variables remain unchanged: older people have lower odds of being in a steady romantic relationship vs. being single with no desire to marry. Having a college education is the only other individual attribute to have a statistically significant effect. People with a college education have higher odds than people who have not completed high school to be in a steady romantic relationship vs. be single with no desire to marry.

Column 3 shows the odds of being married vs. being single with no desire to marry. The effects of the basic demographic variables remained unchanged when the other individual attributes are added to the equation, with one exception: the oldest category, aged 55 – 69 is no



different than the youngest category to be married vs. single with no desire to marry. People who were ever divorced have lower odds of being married vs. being single with no desire to marry. Interestingly, the effect of having ever divorced is statistically insignificant in the odds of being single with a desire to marry vs. being single with no desire to marry (Column 1).

Having any children increases the odds of being married vs. being single with no desire to marry, but this coefficient is difficult to interpret, as most of the children in married couples are the product of the marriage. Having a college education (or high school education) increases the odds of being married vs. being single with a desire to marry, again supporting the hypothesis that education increases the gain from marriage. Similarly, being enrolled in school reduces the odds of being married vs. being single with no desire to marry, supporting the hypothesis that people enrolled in school typically are not yet ready for marriage, even net of age.

- Table 3 about here -

## **DISCUSSION**

The delay in the timing of first marriages, combined with an increase in divorce, has resulted in higher numbers of single people at older ages than in the past. In this study we examined, for the first time, singles' attitudes toward marriage over a wide age range, from 18 to 69. We found that singles in their 50s and 60s are less likely to want to marry, even if the right person came along, than their younger counterparts. Single men and women under the age of 55 are just as likely to desire to marry as those in their early twenties. However, single people in their mid-fifties and later do not feel that the expected gain from marriage outweigh the costs.

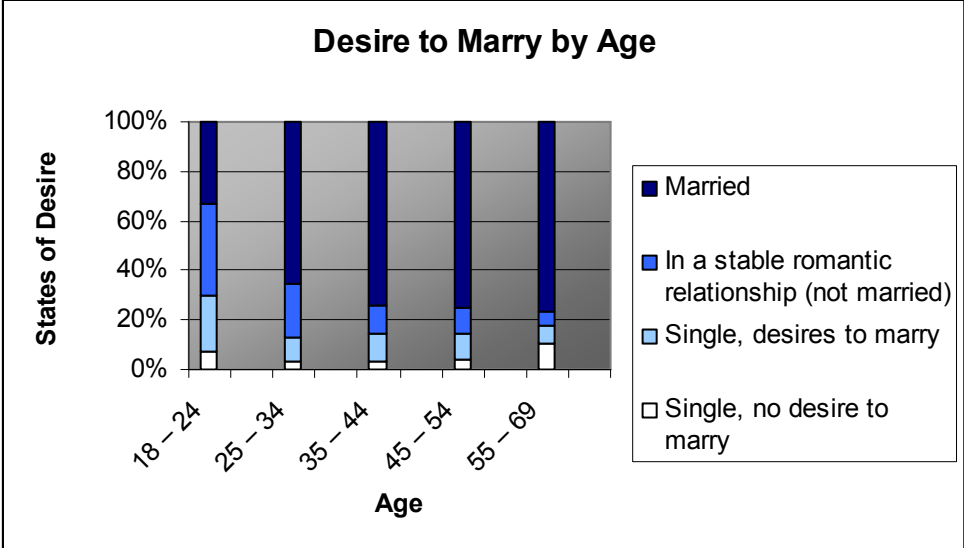
This finding is robust, and contrary to our expectations, the effect of age is not explained away by age differences in factors that might change the expected gain from marriage, such as education, employment, having children, religiosity, and previous experiences with divorce.

Having children does reduce the desire to marry among singles, suggesting that people perceive children as incompatible with marriage. Individuals with a college degree are more likely to desire to marry compared to those with no education. However, these factors do not account for the age differences in the desire to marry.

It is possible that as people age, other unmeasured characteristics, such as health or financial well-being may affect the expected gain from marriage. For example, in the case of widows, it is their husbands' education and employment that determines the pension they receive, (not than their own education or employment), so that our measures may not adequately represent their level of financial need.

Overall, these results provide important insight into the decline in marriage rates with age. The underlying mechanism is probably a process of selection into marriage, whereby people who find marriage desirable eventually marry. But, people who are single at older ages do seem to be rejecting marriage, and they are less likely to want to marry than younger singles. The need to understand singles' desire to marry across the full life course is becoming more crucial with the increasingly later ages at marriage and the large proportion of the population that returns to the marriage market at later ages after divorce. Future studies will need to use longitudinal data to examine changes in the desire to marry over the life course.

**Figure 1. Distribution of desire to marry by age, GSS 1996, 1998 (N=3078)**



*TABLE 1 – MEANS AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTIONS OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES BY DESIRE TO MARRY (N=3078).*

	Single, no desire to marry	Single, desires to marry	In a steady relationship	Married
Male	37.7	44.8	44.9	46.8
White	75.4	76.8	72.6	86.2
African-American	17.0	19.2	21.7	8.3
Hispanic	7.6	4.0	5.7	5.5
Grew up in intact family	86.8	82.6	78.6	87.8
Ever divorced	52.2	45.1	42.2	23.6
Has any children	69.2	47.9	54.3	85.8
Not employed	40.2	18.3	25.6	24.5
Employed part-time	10.1	12.2	13.8	10.5
Employed full-time	49.7	69.5	60.6	65
No high school education	18.3	5.9	11.8	9.2
High school	36.5	34.4	35.4	34.0
Some college	31.4	32.6	27.8	27.0
College	13.8	27.1	25.0	29.8
Enrolled in school	5.7	4.9	5.9	0.8
Attends church	25.8	27.4	16.6	35.4
N	159	328	457	2134

TABLE 2 – MULTINOMIAL REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (STANDARD ERRORS)  
 PREDICTING THE ODDS OF BEING MARRIED, in a RELATIONSHIP, and SINGLE WITH  
 DESIRE TO MARRY vs. BEING SINGLE WITH NO DESIRE TO MARRY (N=3078).

	Single with desire to marry vs. single with no desire to marry	In steady relationship vs. single with no desire to marry	Married vs. single with no desire to marry
Age 25 – 34	0.002 (.392)	0.413 (.367)	1.943 ** (.361)
Age 35 – 44	-0.359 (.365)	-0.452 (.354)	1.931 ** (.339)
Age 45 – 54	-0.524 (.376)	-0.904 * (.365)	1.806 ** (.344)
Age 55 – 69	-1.652 ** (.369)	-2.403 ** (.362)	1.015 ** (.313)
<b>Basic demographic characteristics</b>			
Male	0.471 * (.227)	0.417 (.218)	0.375 * (.192)
African-American	0.026 (.286)	0.039 (.273)	-0.971 ** (.252)
Hispanic	-1.190 * (.479)	-0.799 (.414)	-0.594 (.3556)
Constant	1.097	1.568	1.504
Log Likelihood	-2229.3702		
Pseudo R square	0.0960		
Chi square	395.89		

Notes: The reference group for age is age 18 - 24, the reference group for race is white. The equation is weighted for number of adults in the household. \*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$

*TABLE 3 – MULTINOMIAL REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (STANDARD ERRORS)  
PREDICTING THE ODDS OF BEING MARRIED, in a RELATIONSHIP, and SINGLE WITH  
DESIRE TO MARRY vs. BEING SINGLE WITH NO DESIRE TO MARRY (N=3078).*

	Single with desire to marry vs. single with no desire to marry	In a steady relationship vs. single with no desire to marry	Married vs. single with no desire to marry
Age 25 – 34	0.048 (.413)	0.280 (.375)	1.553 ** (.368)
Age 35 – 44	-0.183 (.394)	-0.623 (.373)	1.553 ** (.349)
Age 45 – 54	-0.269 (.441)	-1.096 ** (.409)	1.495 ** (.380)
Age 55 – 69	-1.171 ** (.453)	-2.516 ** (.425)	0.702 (.374)
<b>Basic demographic characteristics</b>			
Male	0.414 (.240)	0.441 (.231)	0.431 * (.206)
African-American	0.294 (.299)	0.339 (.286)	-1.147 ** (.268)
Hispanic	-0.894 (.486)	-0.506 (.424)	-0.591 (.361)
<b>Potential gains to marriage</b>			
Employed part-time	0.682 (.428)	0.340 (.388)	0.037 (.338)
Employed full-time	0.546 (.308)	-0.036 (.274)	0.266 (.242)
College education	1.244 ** (.428)	1.075 ** (.386)	1.361 ** (.342)
Some college education	0.480 (.401)	0.116 (.354)	0.417 (.307)
High school education	0.796 * (.386)	0.373 (.336)	0.579 * (.291)
Currently enrolled in school	0.127 (.586)	-0.272 (.518)	-1.512 ** (.568)
Any children	-0.622 ** (.221)	-0.108 (.215)	1.623 ** (.208)
Attends church	0.169 (.250)	-0.440 (.246)	0.380 (.210)
Grew up in intact family	-0.124 (.319)	-0.306 (.300)	-0.159 (.283)
Ever divorced	0.025 (.243)	0.317 (.232)	-1.648 ** (.206)

Constant	0.161	1.503	0.476
Log Likelihood	-1942.6423		
Pseudo R square	0.2123		
Chi square	842.18		

Notes: The reference group for age is age 18 - 24, the reference group for race is white, the reference group for employment is not employed, the reference group for education is less than high school. The equation is weighted for number of adults in the household.

\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.01$





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