

# The Influence of Perceived Marital Benefits and Expectations on Marital Outcomes by Race

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## Background/Conceptual Framework

- Family entry is increasingly marked by a birth instead of a marriage. Forty percent of first births occur outside of a marital union (Hamilton, Martin, and Ventura 2016). Changes in family formation differ by race; Seventy-nine percent for Marital expectations have been found to differ by race with change overtime (Tucker and Mitchel-Kiernan 1995; Crissey 2005)
- Marital expectations have been found to be useful for predicting marriage among unmarried parents (Waller and McLanahan 2005)
- Marital benefits also differ by race (Sassler and Schoen 1999), but no work has identified if this is true among unmarried parents.
- Other factors have been found to be useful for understanding marriage among unmarried parents including economic stability, relationship status and quality.
- The present work contends that perceptions and expectations may be potentially more beneficial in predicting behavior than attitudes.

## Research Questions

- Does the way in which survey questions are asked about family formation behavior influence respondent's answers?
- Do Black and White young women differ in their desired timing of marriage and childbearing?
- Do Black women desire childbearing relative to marriage more often than White women?

## Data

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, representing 20 major U.S. cities. I utilized the mother baseline, 1 year and five-year follow up interview. The full Sample included 4,898 respondents

### Analytic Sample:

- Nonmissing on race and lived with mother
- (N=3653 unmarried mothers)
- Multiple imputations were run to deal with missing values on my covariates.

## Methods

- Ordered Logistic regression was used to delineate the influence independent variables have on marital expectations.
  - What are the chances that you will marry the baby's father in the future? Answer: 1 = little to no chance; 2 = 50/50 chance; 3 = pretty good chance to almost certain.
- OLS regression was used to examine the relationship between perceived marital benefits and all IVs.
  - How do you think your life would be different if you were married the baby's father right now "how financially secure," "overall happiness," "freedom to do what you want," "your sex life," and "your relations with your parents" with answers ranging from (1) "much worse" to (5) "much better" (alpha = .76).
- Logistic regression to determine how independent variables influence subsequent marriage.
  - Whether or not mother married the baby's father five years after a nonmarital birth

## Results

### Sample Characteristics of Unmarried Mothers by Race

	Blacks	Whites
AGE (mean):	23.90	24.16
Lived with Parents at age 15	29.0	42.0
Self-reported Health (mean)	3.77	3.97
EDUCATION (%):		
< High School Degree	24.1	23.9
High School Degree	49.7	44.3
Some College or More	26.1	31.8
Father employed	63.9	84.1
Religious service attendance (1-5)	2.95	2.66
Ever incarcerated	42.0	41.2
Substance abuse problem	2.9	9.3
Relationship status (ref=Friends)	8.3	6.2
Visiting	43.1	30.1
Cohabiting	40.7	54.4
Father has children w/ another woman	52.4	43.9

## Racial Differences in Marriage Formation



## Bivariate and Multivariate Results

### Marital expectations by race

	Marital Expectations Odds Ratios	Marital Expectations Odds Ratios (full model)
RACE		
Blacks (reference)		
Whites	1.85***	1.98***
Hispanics	1.39***	1.17***
Other	1.33***	1.42***
EDUCATION (%):		
< High School Degree (reference)		
High School Degree		.82***
Some College or More		1.00
Father's employment status		1.11**
Relationship status (ref=Friends)		
Visiting		2.33***
Cohabiting		7.59***

### Perceived Marital Benefits by race

	Perceived Benefits $\beta$	Perceived Benefits $\beta$ (full model)
RACE		
Blacks (reference)		
Whites	-.27***	-.20***
Hispanics	-.07***	-.05***
Other	-.10***	-.05*
EDUCATION (%):		
< High School Degree (reference)		
High School Degree		.02†
Some College or More		-.04***
Father's Employment status		-.01
Relationship status (ref=Friends)		
Visiting		.34***
Cohabiting		.21***

## Influence that marital expectations and perceived marital benefits have on later marriage

	Married BF Odds Ratios	Married BF Odds Ratios	Married BF Odds Ratios (full model)
RACE			
Blacks (reference)			
Whites	2.60***	1.98**	2.12***
Hispanics	2.70***	2.41***	2.10***
Other	2.37***	2.18***	1.65**
Marital Expectations		.80***	.82***
Perceived Marital Benefits		2.00***	1.69***

## Findings

- Both marital expectations and the perceived benefits of marriage differed significantly by race. This finding is consistent with recent studies that find that African Americans are generally less optimistic about their chances of establishing a marital union than whites and Hispanics.
- Including subjective evaluations about one's chances of developing a marital union and their perceptions of the benefits marriage will provide did in fact depress racial differences by race.
- The present study demonstrates that noneconomic factors can be very useful for understanding marital behavior

## Next Steps/Limitations

The present work provides encouragement for future researchers to further examine how noneconomic factors can be useful in studying marital behavior.

- Findings cannot be generalized to women who are not parents; the sample cannot be generalized to well-educated, high earning mothers.

- Other variables not included may influence how race impact the variables I examined.

## Acknowledgements

I would to John DeLamater, Marcy Carlson, Christine Schwartz for providing insights and guidance to my scholastic development. I would also like to thank the Sociology/Criminal Justice department for supporting my research and encouraging me to be the best scholar I can be.





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## Background Conceptual Framework

Family entry is a two-stage process. First, a couple must form a marital union. Second, the couple must maintain the union. This study focuses on the first stage, marital formation. The study examines the influence of perceived marital benefits and expectations on marital formation, controlling for race and socioeconomic status.

## Methods

Logistic regression was used to estimate the influence of perceived marital benefits and expectations on marital formation, controlling for race and socioeconomic status. The study used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY).

## Results

**Racial Differences in Marriage Formation**

Race	White	Black
Married	2.80***	1.80***
Never	2.70***	2.40***
Divorced	2.30***	2.80***

**Bivariate and Multivariate Results**

Variable	White	Black
Married	2.80***	1.80***
Never	2.70***	2.40***
Divorced	2.30***	2.80***

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. [Name], for his guidance and support. I would also like to thank my colleagues for their assistance and support.

### UNCP Campus Scholars

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### And Communities are Structured by Patch-and-Landscape-Level Factors

Poster by [Name]



**Ant Communities are Structured by Landscape-Level Factors**  
Larson, D. Campbell & Thomas, D. Crow

**Introduction**  
Ant communities are structured by landscape-level factors, including land use, vegetation, and climate. This study examines the relationship between these factors and ant community composition and function.

**Methods**  
Ant communities were sampled across a range of landscape types, including urban, suburban, and rural areas. Data on ant species richness, abundance, and functional traits were collected and analyzed using statistical models.

**Results**  
The study found that ant community composition and function are strongly influenced by landscape-level factors. Urban areas generally support higher species richness and abundance, while rural areas support higher functional diversity.

**Conclusions & Implications**  
The results of this study have important implications for understanding the role of landscape-level factors in shaping ant communities. This information can be used to inform conservation and management decisions.

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**The Influence of Perceived Marital Burden on Marital Outcomes**  
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**Background/Conceptual Framework**  
This study is grounded in the theory of marital burden, which posits that perceived marital burden leads to negative marital outcomes. The study examines the relationship between perceived marital burden and marital outcomes, including marital satisfaction, marital stability, and marital functioning.

**Methods**  
The study used a cross-sectional design to collect data from a sample of married couples. Data on perceived marital burden, marital satisfaction, marital stability, and marital functioning were collected and analyzed using statistical models.

**Results**  
The study found that perceived marital burden is a significant predictor of negative marital outcomes. Higher levels of perceived marital burden are associated with lower levels of marital satisfaction, marital stability, and marital functioning.

**Conclusions & Implications**  
The results of this study have important implications for understanding the role of perceived marital burden in shaping marital outcomes. This information can be used to inform interventions designed to reduce marital burden and improve marital outcomes.