

The Daily Tar Heel

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April 25, 1990

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IN DEPTH

Black women facing scarcity of men

By ERIK ROGERS
Staff Writer

Analysis

Black females find themselves in a predicament when it comes to matters of the heart.

With the increasing shortage of black men, black women are competing against each other for black males. And for those who lose, they either find an alternative, like interracial relationships, or they find themselves alone.

Black females presently are not lowering their standards to attract black men, but that could change, according to Harriet Simmons, communications director of the Urban League in Miami. Simmons has collected data on relationships within the black race during the past few years.

"Nowadays the black female is becoming more and more successful, and they don't want to settle for someone who sells drugs or works at McDonald's," Simmons said. "But in the future, black females could end up lowering their standards to the point that they may end up with men who have been in prison."

"After all, black women do go for the good-looking men, and a lot of the good-looking black men are currently in prison. They may go for the men without realizing that they (the men) have been in prison."

But Simmons said she did not see many black females marrying interracially, at least for the time being.

"Interracial marriages have a tendency not to work out in a lot of cases, and therefore I don't think there will be a lot of black females marrying men of other races, in particular white men," Simmons said.

However, Simmons said the time may come when black females will be forced to consider interracial relationships because there will be more white men in corporate society than black men.

"If there are far more white men in the professional world than black men, then there may be some black females who will be willing to have relationships with white males," Simmons said.

And as black men become fewer in society, Simmons said she saw intimate relationships becoming scarcer in the future because black females are becoming more involved in their professional careers.

"Relationships may just become something physical for the black female. In other words, she will have a companion, but that is it. There won't be that true commitment," Simmons said. "Black females are striving to achieve, so they may not have time to continue searching for that right person to marry or simply have a true relationship with, if there are not any men out there for them to have."

Others also think most black women will not end up marrying interracially. Dr. James Davies, from the department of sociology at North Carolina Central University, said society should not expect an increase in marriages between black women and white men.

"Only 1 percent of today's marriages involve a white male and a black female," Davies said. "Besides, there are many black women who are becoming accustomed to living by themselves anyway, and I don't see that changing in the future."

There are other alternatives for black females who do not want relationships, Davies said.

"Black women can turn to kinship as a source of support, because families can provide them with some support," Davies said. "And some black women are willing to adopt children, so they don't have to worry about whether the shortage of black men will keep them

from having children."

Meanwhile, the shortage of black men has caused many black women to wonder about the black family as a unit. Simmons said the condition of the black family was not in good shape, and the future could be worse.

"The black family is nonexistent," Simmons said. "The average setup for many black families includes the mother and the kids, but there is no father."

"What makes me mad is the fact that the black male was there to make a baby, but he can't be there as a father. In the meantime he is going out on the streets and bragging to his friends about how he got his girlfriend pregnant. And this obviously leaves the black female in an awkward situation."

But the main problem facing black females is the decrease in black males in society. Simmons said 609,000 black men were in jail at the present time. And this problem is not being offset by blacks who are attending school.

"There are only 434,000 blacks, both females and males, that are going to school," Simmons said. "And I am including not only the college grades, but the high school and elementary grades as well."

In the meantime, there are students on campus who have thought about how black females can handle the shortage of black males. Ixchel Baker, a black sophomore majoring in political science, said she would not settle for someone below her standards.

"I don't want a man who is not going to care about having a job or being responsible," Baker said. "I don't need someone else to help me starve. I can do that by myself." But Baker said there were days when she did think about how the shortage in black men could affect her.

"I do feel pressure at times because I sometimes wonder if there will be a man out there for me," Baker said.

Baker also questioned the amount of time black females take in finding a companion.

"I know the Lord says to 'seek and ye shall find,' but how long are black women going to have to seek in order to find a quality black man?" Baker said.

Meanwhile, Simmons said black men on campus considered themselves valuable because of the shortage of black males, so they are going to be selective in choosing their mates.

"Black men have a macho ego to begin with, and the ones on the college campuses know they are marketable, so they consider themselves to be a commodity."

Campus Calendar

WEDNESDAY
Noon: The Institute of Latin American Studies present Jorge Ordones, Senior Public Affairs Officer at the International Monetary Fund, who will speak on "Debt and Conditionality in Latin America," in 210 Union. He is also meeting students at 3:30 p.m. in 110 Gardner for an informal question/answer period.
The Public Policy Analysis Majors Union present "The DPT Vaccine Litigation: A Case Study in Torts, Risk Assessment and Formulation of Public Policy," with Professor Don Hornstein of the Law School, until 1 p.m. in 305 New East.
5 p.m.: Women's Forum will hold its final meeting of the semester at the Campus Y. Cindy Israel will be speaking about Georgia O'Keeffe.
The UNC Vegetarian Society will have a free vegetarian dinner until 7 p.m. in Gerard Hall. All are welcome.
5:30 p.m.: The Wesley Foundation will meet at 214 Pittsboro St. behind the Carolina Inn and then travel to an area park for a picnic/cookout. The building team will meet after this program. Dinner is \$2.
The Asian Students Association will have its last meeting of the year in 108 Bingham. Please come!
Psi Chi is sponsoring its annual potluck picnic at the Forest Theatre. The entire Psychology Department is invited (students, professors and TA's). Please bring your favorite dish. Drinks will be provided.
The Newman Center is holding its Senior Send-off. Come kick those seniors out into the real (?) world!
8 p.m.: SEAC will have a short meeting to vote for our Regional Coordinating Group in the network, in the Y lounge. Everyone please come, it will only take 30 minutes and Lisa is going to sing for us!
11 p.m.: WXYZ's Inside Track will feature "Fear of a Black Planet," the latest release from Public Enemy.

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 Vanity waste basket
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 Colander
 Cookie sheet
 Cutting board — acrylic
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 Kitchen utensils:
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