

Patterns of interethnic marriage in Ghana: 2000 – 2010

Pearl S. Kyei¹

Abstract

Patterns of assortative mating are informative because they reflect the strength of social boundaries across groups. Ethnic homogamy is particularly important as it provides a useful measure of social cohesion in multi-ethnic societies. This paper investigates the patterns of interethnic marriage in Ghana using the census data of the 2000 and 2010 censuses. Ethnic homogamy is strong in Ghana with 12.3% of the sample being married to a spouse of a different ethnicity. The likelihood of being in an interethnic marriage varies widely by demographic characteristics. Younger people are significantly more likely to intermarry suggesting that ethnic boundaries tend to become more open over time. Educational attainment significantly increases the propensity for intermarriage supporting the hypothesis that education offers opportunities to join more ethnically diverse networks. Intermarriage is more prevalent in urban areas likely due to the greater ethnic diversity of urban populations. Ethnic minorities tend to intermarry more, which is consistent with the theory that smaller groups face greater marriage market constraints.

Keywords: interethnic marriage, marriage, assortative mating, social stratification

¹ Regional Institute for Population Studies, University of Ghana. E-mail: pkyei@ug.edu.gh
Received on April 25th, 2021/ Accepted on January 31st, 2022

Ghana Journal of Geography Vol. 14 (1), 2022 pages 125-140
<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/gjg.v14i1.7>

Introduction

Positive assortative mating or homogamy describes couples who share similar traits and negative assortative mating refers to couples who do not. Previous scholars have shown that couples are generally more likely to exhibit positive assortative mating on characteristics (Blackwell & Lichter, 2000; 2005; Choi and Tienda, 2017; Schwartz & Mare, 2005; Schwartz, 2013). Homogamy has important implications for social stratification in society: intermarriage is a sign of social openness in society. In a diverse society, the lack of intermarriage will preserve the social divide between groups. Thus, assortative mating can be informative because they reflect the strength of social boundaries.

Studying assortative mating is important because of the implications for intergenerational transfer of socio-economic characteristics. Parents passing on traits and resources to their children reproduces differences between groups and in some cases widens them in subsequent generations. Stratification studies of homogamy typically focus on education but ethnicity, especially in the sub-Saharan Africa context is an important measure of social stratification. Ethnicity has been identified as a significant predictor of the socio-demographic processes that affect population wellbeing such as fertility (Bakibinga et al., 2016; Alaba, Olubusoye & Olaomi, 2017; Shapiro, & Tambashe, 2017); health (Adedini et al., 2015; Odimegwu & Somefun, 2017; Schellenberg & Berhanu, 2020; Victora et al., 2020); schooling (Caldwell, Caldwell & Orubuloye, 1992; Franck and Rainer, 2012; Kramon & Posner, 2016), and marriage (Mobolaji, Fatusi, & Adedini, 2020; Carlos 2004; Palamuleni, 2011).

Heterogamy, marrying persons with different characteristics has implications for social cohesion, something that is particularly relevant for ethnic homogamy. In a world, where conflicts can arise from ethnic tensions, some conflicts may be avoided where there is extensive social interaction between groups. Marriage is a joining of individuals; it is a joining of families and communities and thus intermarriage is a way to build bridges across diverse groups. Over time, ethnic intermarriage may make it more difficult for ethnic tensions to escalate if there are enough members of the group affiliated with the opposing group to resist emerging conflict. Demarest and Haer (2021) who use interethnic marriage as a measure of intimate intergroup contact in their cross-national study of 24 sub-Saharan African countries find that interethnic marriage is correlated with reduced likelihood of experiencing conflict. Similarly, Smits (2010) concludes from his study in former Yugoslavia that ethnic intermarriage is correlated with lower likelihood of violent conflict. Further, the children from interethnic marriage blur ethnic lines because they represent a bridge between groups. Thus, children of mixed ethnicity may further enhance social cohesion by increasing the incidence of interethnic marriage because they cross ethnic boundaries. Few studies have examined marriage outcomes for multi-ethnic adults although Monden and Smits (2005), in their study of Latvian intermarriage found that children with parents of mixed ethnicity are more likely to intermarry.

As informative as mating patterns are, relatively few studies have systematically studied ethnic homogamy in the sub-Saharan African context. The purpose of this study is to estimate the level of intermarriage and identify the individual and structural characteristics that increase the odds of ethnic intermarriage in Ghana and to determine whether ethnic groups are more likely to intermarry into certain groups than others are. Ghana provides an appropriate setting to study interethnic marriage since it is a home for a diverse population; the 2010 census estimated there are almost 100 ethnic sub-groups that can be classified into eight categories based on linguistic and cultural similarities that made up 98.5% of the population in the 2010 census (Ghana Statistical Service 2013). An interesting characteristic of the country that rises from this ethnic diversity is the absence of a conventional ethnic majority in all regions. Due to the regional differences in the concentration of ethnic groups, certain groups can be both a minority and majority group. A group may be dominant in one part of the country and have scarce representation in other parts of Ghana. For instance, the largest group, the Akan who make up just about a half of the Ghanaian population represents the majority in less than half of the regions in Ghana. The country has also been largely free of

ethnic conflicts, and it will be particularly informative to see whether the ethnic harmony translates into frequent intermarriage or whether ethnic groups merely coexist but do not interact.

The literature identifies both individual and structural influences on the likelihood of intermarriage. A significant predictor of intermarriage is socioeconomic status (Bandyopadhyay & Green, 2021; Crespín-Boucard, 2020; Monden and Smits, 2005). The evidence suggests that people who intermarry tend to have higher socioeconomic background and education than their homogamous counterparts. The assimilation theory (Kalmijn, 1998) predicts that people from minority groups would tend to be those who intermarry because they have the means to interact with the majority group. Lieberman and Waters (1988) theorise that higher education weakens traditional ethnic ties by making people more open-minded and increasing their contacts with people of other ethnicities. Education can also lead to migration away from ethnically homogenous rural areas to more diverse urban areas where there are better schooling options and job opportunities (Kulczycki and Lobo, 2002).

Apart from individual characteristics, structural factors also influence intermarriage. A structural factor that contributes to intermarriage is the composition of the marriage market, which is influenced by the size of the ethnic group (Bandyopadhyay and Green, 2021; Choi and Tienda 2016; Kalmijn, 1998). Ethnic majorities are significantly less likely to intermarry (Hwang, Saenz & Aguirre, 1997; Jacobs and Labov, 2002). Minorities make up a smaller proportion of the population and so their marriage markets have a greater number of potential spouses from other groups thereby increasing the chances of finding a spouse of another ethnicity. Even people who have a strong homogamy preference would have to contemplate marrying outside their ethnic group if there is a lack of potential spouses of their ethnicity in their marriage market. When the available options are either to intermarry or remain single, there should be higher intermarriage rates driven by the people who would prefer to marry someone of another ethnicity than not marrying at all. McCaa (1993) shows that an imbalance in ethnic sex ratios in early twentieth century New York contributed to intermarriage among immigrants. Stier and Shavit (1994) also find contemporary evidence of the marriage market effect on intermarriage: Israeli women out-marry in response to unfavourable sex ratios.

Another structural influence on the odds of intermarriage is the ethnic diversity of the marriage market. People living in ethnically diverse areas, such as urban areas, would have a larger part of the pool of potential spouses including those from other ethnic groups so that would increase their likelihood of marrying into another ethnic group (Bandyopadhyay and Green 2021; Bessudnov and Mondenn, 2020; Crespín-Boucard, 2020).

This paper examines the demographic and structural influences on the odds of ethnic intermarriage in Ghana focusing on age and educational attainment as the demographic influences with urban residence and affiliation with a major ethnic group as the structural influences. All the aforementioned factors will be expected to be positively correlated with the odds of being in an interethnic marriage as predicted by the literature.

Data and Methods

Data comes from 10% integrated public microdata samples of the 2000 and 2010 Ghana Population and Housing Census (Minnesota Population Centre 2020). The sample is restricted to married female household heads and spouses of household heads. This is because the census collects information on relationships to the household head and so it is only possible to identify the spouses of household heads. The sample

excludes couples where at least partner does not belong to one of the eight¹ major ethnic groups. Individuals who do not fall to any of these groups show up in the "other" category and the census does not provide detailed information on their ethnicity. For a couple where both partners' ethnicity is unknown, it is impossible to determine if they are in an interethnic union. Even though interethnic couples where one partner's ethnicity is unknown and the other partner belonged to one of the major groups could be identified as interethnic union, they were excluded as well because the ethnicity of both partners was not known. The sample was also limited to married couples aged 20 to 50 years who have partners aged 20 to 60 years in order to limit the influence of education selection in the youngest ages and mortality selection for the older age groups. The final sample was 297,167 women.

The greatest benefit of the census is that it provides a large sample, which is very useful for a homogamy study such as this. Where intermarriage rates between certain groups are very low, a small sample would not have enough cases for those ethnic combinations and a sizeable dataset such as the census avoids this problem. The main limitation of the census is that it only provides information on the current marital status on spouse of the respondent. If interethnic unions are less stable for instance, then a sample of currently married people will underestimate the number of interethnic unions formed because it will exclude all the marriages that ended in a divorce. The other limitation of the census is that it requires respondents to select one ethnic group. This makes classification of interethnic couples challenging with multi-ethnic individuals. For this study, the assumption is that multi-ethnic people select the ethnicity that they identify better with on the census questionnaire.

The analysis predicts the correlates of intermarriage using logistic regression analysis. The dependent variable is a categorical variable for whether the respondent is married to someone of a different ethnicity. As this is a cross-sectional dataset, the age of the respondent is a proxy for time with the expectation that younger people would be more likely to be in interethnic marriages. Due the sample being pooled from two different censuses, year of birth was used instead of current age for purposes of comparability. Educational attainment is measured using levels of formal education completed and urban status with a dummy variable for whether the respondent lives in an urban area. Due to the lack of availability of information on whether the respondent was living in the same area as their marriage market or not, a variable to control for whether the respondent is residing in the same region where they were born is included. To construct the variable for ethnic majority, a univariate analysis determined the ethnic composition for each region (see Figure 1) allowing for the creation of a dummy variable that measures whether the respondent belongs to an ethnic group that made up more than half of the population in the region. All regions had an ethnic majority group except for Greater Accra where no ethnic group made up more than 40% of the population.

¹ The eight major ethnic groups make up 98.46% and 97.96% of the 2000 and 2010 microdata samples respectively.

Results

Figure 1: Ethnic Distribution of Sample by Region

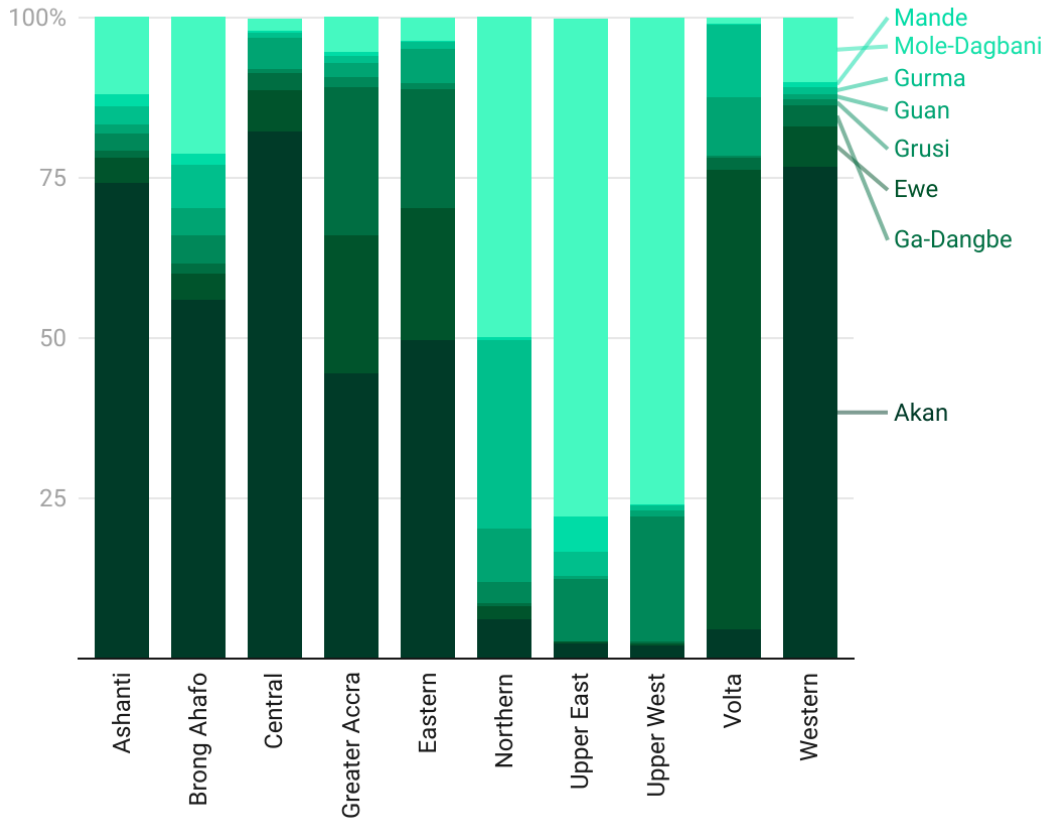


Figure 1: Ethnic Distribution of Sample by Region

Figure 2: Regional Distribution of Major Ethnic Groups

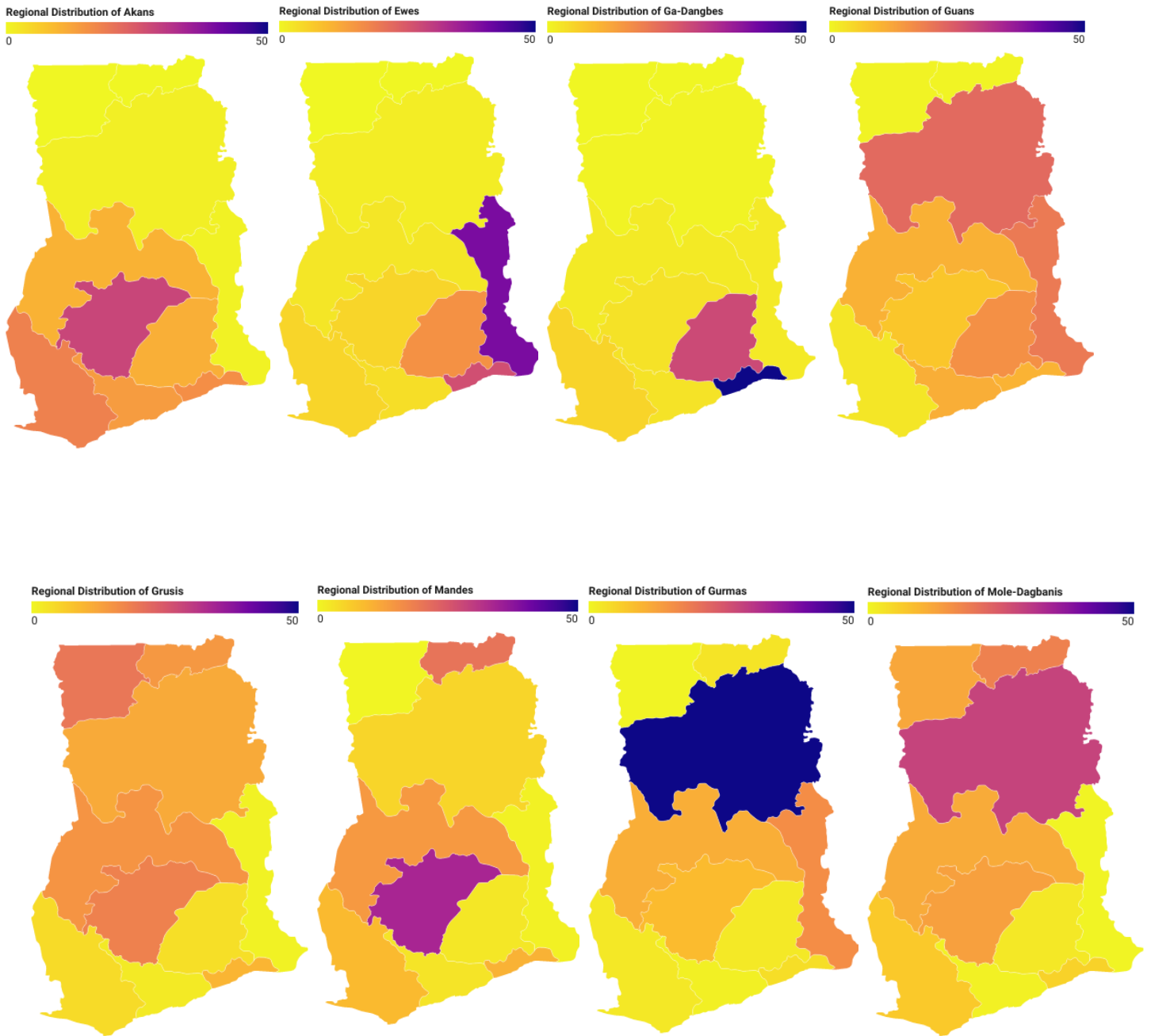


Figure 2 presents the regional composition of the different ethnic groups. Except for the Guan, who are more evenly distributed, the other ethnic groups are predominantly concentrated in specific parts of the country. This highlights the importance of creating region-specific ethnic majority variables because members of the largest ethnic groups nationally may be minorities depending on where they live.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Sample (Proportions)			
Variable	Total	Homogamy	Interethnic Marriage
Interethnic Marriage	12.3	0.0	100.0
Urban	52.6	54.3	40.2
Ethnic majority in region	63.3	66.1	43.0
Resides in region where they were born	68.3	69.6	58.6
<i>Census Year</i>			
2000	38.9	38.5	41.8
2010	61.1	61.5	51.2
<i>Year of birth</i>			
Before 1955	2.8	2.8	2.7
1955 to 1959	4.0	4.0	3.9
1960 to 1964	12.4	12.5	11.2
1965 to 1969	14.7	14.8	14.0
1970 to 1974	21.3	21.4	20.7
1975 to 1979	18.8	18.6	19.8
1980 to 1984	15.6	15.5	16.2
After 1985	10.5	10.4	11.3
<i>Ethnicity</i>			
Akan	48.8	50.3	37.9
Ga-Dangbe	7.3	6.2	15.0
Ewe	14.2	13.6	18.4
Guan	3.7	3.3	6.3
Gurma	5.5	5.9	2.9
Mole-Dagbani	16.9	17.3	13.8
Grusi	2.6	2.5	3.8
Mande	1.1	1.0	1.8
<i>Education</i>			
No education	44.0	45.6	32.5
Some primary	8.5	8.4	9.2
Primary	36.6	36.1	40.9
Secondary and higher	10.8	9.9	17.4
<i>Religion</i>			
No religion/Other	5.2	5.3	4.6
Muslim	14.5	14.4	15.2

Christian	73.6	73.2	76.5
Traditional	6.7	7.1	3.8
<i>Region</i>			
Western	11.5	11.9	9.2
Central	8.3	8.5	6.9
Greater Accra	17.6	15.5	32.7
Volta	7.8	8.2	5.2
Eastern	10.8	10.1	15.5
Ashanti	18.6	19.3	13.3
Brong Ahafo	9.1	9.4	6.8
Northern	9.7	10.3	5.8
Upper East	4.0	4.1	3.1
Upper West	2.7	2.9	1.5
Sample size	297,167	260,687	36,480

Table 1 presents that the descriptive statistics of the sample, which indicates that the overall prevalence of intermarriage in the sample is 12.3% with substantial variation in the composition of the homogamous and heterogamous samples as expected. The most striking difference observed is that with respect to the education composition. The proportion of women with secondary education and higher in the interethnic marriage sample is almost twice that of the homogamous marriage (17.4% compared to 9.9%). Women with no education make up almost half of the homogamous sample (45.6%) compared to about one-third (32.5%) of the intermarriage sample.

For ethnicity, the Akan, Ga-Dangbe and Guan stand out as the ethnic groups with the greatest differences between the two marriage types. In this, the Akans make up a smaller percentage of the intermarriage group relative to those homogamous marriages while the opposite is true for Ga-Dangbes and Guans. The proportion of those belonging to the ethnic majority in the region is over 20 percentage points higher (66.1% compared to 43.0%) for women in homogamous unions. A greater proportion of females in interethnic marriages are living in urban areas (59.7% compared to 45.7% for those in ethnically homogenous unions). About a third of the women in intermarriages are in the Greater Accra Region, which is the most urbanised region of the country, home of the capital city Accra and with the greatest ethnic diversity (see Figure 1).

Table 2: Logistic Regression Results Predicting Probability of Interethnic Marriage						
Coefficient	Odds Ratio	z	P>z	Odds Ratio	z	P>z
Ethnic majority in region	--	--	--	0.31	-35.00	0.00
Resides in region where they were born	0.78	-15.40	0.00	0.86	-9.56	0.00
Urban	1.22	12.96	0.00	1.26	14.68	0.00
Census year	0.64	-29.28	0.00	0.65	-28.19	0.00
<i>Ethnicity (Reference: Guan)</i>						
Akan	0.34	-33.28	0.00	0.83	-4.58	0.00
Ga-Dangbe	0.80	-6.32	0.00	1.12	3.24	0.00
Ewe	0.62	-14.55	0.00	0.94	-1.86	0.06
Gurma	0.37	-18.97	0.00	0.34	-20.49	0.00
Mole-Dagbani	0.50	-18.96	0.00	0.82	-5.30	0.00
Grusi	0.79	-4.84	0.00	0.77	-5.22	0.00
Mande	0.87	-2.10	0.04	0.86	-2.29	0.02
<i>Year of birth (Reference: before 1955)</i>						
1955 to 1959	0.96	-0.70	0.48	0.95	-0.82	0.42
1960 to 1964	0.98	-0.49	0.63	0.97	-0.66	0.51
1965 to 1969	1.08	1.59	0.11	1.07	1.29	0.20
1970 to 1974	1.15	2.92	0.00	1.13	2.54	0.01
1975 to 1979	1.26	4.81	0.00	1.23	4.27	0.00
1980 to 1984	1.36	6.16	0.00	1.31	5.49	0.00
After 1985	1.51	8.06	0.00	1.44	7.21	0.00
<i>Education (Reference: No education)</i>						
Some primary	1.36	13.17	0.00	1.41	14.58	0.00
Completed primary	1.42	20.42	0.00	1.48	23.04	0.00
Completed secondary and higher	1.88	28.88	0.00	1.93	30.16	0.00
<i>Religion (Reference: No/other religion)</i>						
Moslem	1.29	6.14	0.00	1.29	6.15	0.00
Christian	1.00	-0.09	0.93	1.02	0.60	0.55
Traditional	1.09	1.75	0.08	1.12	2.26	0.02
<i>Region (Reference: Greater Accra)</i>						
Western	0.62	-18.55	0.00	0.63	-17.78	0.00
Central	0.66	-14.41	0.00	0.70	-12.68	0.00
Volta	0.37	-26.82	0.00	0.69	-9.78	0.00
Eastern	0.97	-1.53	0.13	0.97	-1.17	0.24
Ashanti	0.51	-29.27	0.00	0.51	-29.22	0.00
Brong Ahafo	0.52	-22.11	0.00	0.52	-22.40	0.00
Northern	0.46	-18.09	0.00	0.67	-10.16	0.00

Upper East	0.63	-8.57	0.00	1.09	1.55	0.12
Upper West	0.39	-13.33	0.00	0.65	-5.89	0.00
Constant	0.13	-32.90	0.00	0.36	-15.14	0.00
Sample size	297167			297167		
Pseudo R2	0.06			0.07		

Table 2 presents the regression results presenting the correlates of interethnic marriage. Relative to the reference category for ethnicity, the Guans, all other ethnic groups have a relatively lower likelihood of being in an interethnic marriage in the first model, which does not control for whether the woman belongs to the ethnic majority. In the second model, once that variable is controlled for, there are substantial changes in the sizes of the coefficients for the Akan (increase), Ga-Dangbe (increase and a transformation to positive odds), Ewe (increase) and Mole-Dagbani (increase). This is understandable as the Akan, Ewe, and Mole-Dagbani are the three ethnic groups that have ethnic majorities and the Ga-Dangbe living predominantly in the Greater Accra Region. The other ethnic group coefficients marginally decreased in the second model.

Compared to the Greater Accra Region, the likelihood of intermarriage is lower in all other regions in the first model. Once the ethnic majority is controlled for, the Upper East has higher odds though the difference is not significant and Volta, Northern and Upper West have increases in the size of their coefficients. Women in urban areas are about 20% more likely to be in an interethnic marriage and the odds are significant. Educational attainment is also significantly correlated with intermarriage odds. Age is correlated with lower odds of being in an interethnic marriage as the coefficients increase in size and significance successively for each cohort. Surprisingly, there are significantly lower odds of being in an interethnic marriage in 2010, which indicates that the prevalence of intermarriage declined in the decade between the two censuses. Compared to persons with no religion, Moslems and Traditionalists are more likely to be in interethnic marriages while Christians do not have significantly different odds in either model.

Ethnicity	Ethnicity of Spouse (Percent)							
	Akan	Ewe	Ga-Dangbe	Grusi	Guan	Gurma	Mande	Mole-Dagbani
Akan	--	57.93	61.38	34.57	43.73	37.19	27.85	36.41
Ewe	34.57	--	25.89	9.48	20.52	9.45	6.48	6.41
Ga-Dangbe	31.92	26.12	--	9.48	11.29	4.52	5.43	6.23
Grusi	6.33	4.13	3.68	--	6.09	11.46	7.88	30.72
Guan	8.53	5.36	3.82	8.57	--	8.04	4.9	5.65
Gurma	4.18	2.14	1.12	3.49	4.03	--	11.56	7.85
Mande	1.96	0.77	0.88	3.94	1.48	7.64	--	6.75
Mole-Dagbani	12.51	3.55	3.22	30.48	12.86	21.71	35.9	--
Sample	36,480	36,480	36,480	36,480	36,480	36,480	36,480	36,480

Table 3: Patterns of Interethnic Marriages for Intermarried Couples

Table 3 presents the patterns of intermarriage by cross tabulating the ethnicity of women with that of their spouses. The pattern that emerges suggests that within interethnic unions, some unions are more likely to occur between specific groups. For instance, almost two-thirds of the Akans in interethnic marriages are married to either Ewes or Ga-Dangbes. A possible explanation can be attributed to geographic proximity due to the distribution of the ethnic groups across the country (see figure 2).

Table 4 then presents the regression separately for each ethnic group predicting the likelihood of having a spouse from a specific ethnicity group with the reference category being the ethnic group in question. The coefficients on ethnicity are presented in the table for each of the eight models. As expected, the odds are highest for marrying into the same group, as the coefficient is negative and significant for all the ethnic groups in all models. Comparing the variation in the size of the coefficients for ethnicity across the models suggests that the odds of intermarrying into certain groups is higher than for others.

Discussion

The paper explores the correlates of interethnic marriage in Ghana. The majority of marriages are ethnically homogamous (almost 87% of household heads in the sample are married to a spouse of the same ethnicity).

The review of previous literature led to the identification of the focal independent variables that were expected to be correlated with the likelihood of intermarriage. This first is that the incidence of ethnic intermarriage should increase over time. We would expect that the strength of ethnic boundaries would decrease over time as there are greater social interactions between groups and as multi-ethnic individuals create social bridges between their ethnic groups. For this reason, the prevalence of interethnic marriages should be rising over time. While the results indicate that younger persons have higher odds of being in an interethnic union, they indicate that the likelihood of being in an interethnic marriage is lower in 2010 compared to 2000. This could mean that ethnic boundaries are not decreasing over time, a finding that analysis of data from future censuses would be required to interrogate further.

The regression also predicts whether educational attainment increases the odds of being in an interethnic marriage. Takyi et al. (2003) find that in Ghana, educational attainment increases the autonomy when choosing a spouse. They propose that educational attainment comes with independence and reduces the importance of the extended family support during decision-making. Educational attainment should also increase the diversity of social networks. The Ghanaian tradition of sending high school students to boarding secondary, often in other parts of the country from where they live, exposes children to ethnically diverse environments that they would otherwise not have experienced. Tertiary institutions provide similarly diverse environments and thus the more education, a person receives, the more ethnically diverse their social network becomes. The findings indicate that educational attainment is correlated with a greater likelihood of being in an interethnic union.

The analysis also shows that ethnic intermarriage is higher in urban areas. The modernization theory of social closure (Smits et al., 1998) predicts that urbanization increase contact between groups. This means that people in urban areas would have more diverse social networks and thus, greater ethnic diversity in their pool of potential spouses. Urbanization weakens traditional family ties and the strength of the extended family network and thus people in urban areas would experience less family control when making marital decisions. This would increase their likelihood of forming interethnic unions even where families are in favour of homogamous marriages. Takyi et al. (2003) show that in Ghana, people in urban areas also have greater freedom when making marital choices and are less likely to rely on family input when choosing a spouse.

Finally, the inclusion of a variable on ethnic majority was meant to assess whether members of ethnic majority groups have lower rates of intermarriage. The findings indicate that ethnic majorities in their region of residence are significantly less likely to be in interethnic marriages. According to the structural model of inter-group relations (Blau, 1977), group size influences the extent that the members interact with other groups as larger groups hinder external interaction with other groups. Thus, members of ethnic

majorities would have less ethnic diversity in their marriage market and should be less likely to form inter-ethnic unions.

Finally, the paper found that ethnic intermarriage is more common between certain ethnic combinations such as Akan/Ga-Dangbe, Akan/Ewe and Ewe/Ga-Dangbe. Blau (1977) also discussed the negative influence on social and spatial distance in the interaction between groups. Members from groups that are similar may be more likely to intermarry since they may have more common cultures and values. Residential segregation by ethnicity also hinders intermarriage because groups have limited interaction thus, it can be expected that groups that have geographic proximity are more likely to be intermarriages.

Conclusions

This paper studied the patterns and predictors of interethnic marriage in Ghana. The findings indicate that ethnic homogamy is strong in Ghana with 12.3% of the sample being married to a spouse of a different ethnicity. The finding that the prevalence of ethnic intermarriage declined between the 2000 and 2010 censuses requires further study of time trends when more recent census data is available to ascertain whether the prevalence will continue to show a downward trend and further analysis of the drivers of the observed time trends. The analysis of time trends is necessary given the correlation between intermarriage and social cohesion alluded to in other studies (Demarest & Haer, 2021; Smits, 2010).

The likelihood of being in an interethnic marriage varies widely by demographic characteristics. The likelihood of being in an interethnic marriage is higher for those in the younger cohorts suggesting that ethnic boundaries are more open for younger persons relative to older ones. Level of educational attainment is also monotonically correlated with the likelihood of being in an interethnic marriage and those with some education being more likely to intermarry than those without any education which supports the theory that attending educational institutions diversifies social networks while increasing willingness to intermarry.

The findings also indicate a correlation between structural influences on interethnic marriage. Ethnic minorities tend to intermarry more, which is consistent with the theory that smaller groups face greater marriage market constraints and are more likely to intermarry while the opposite holds for majority groups (Jacobs and Labov, 2002; McCaa, 1993; Stier and Shavit, 1994). Intermarriage is more prevalent in urban areas likely due to the greater ethnic diversity of urban populations suggesting that intermarriages would become more common as the country continues to urbanise.

Acknowledgments

The author sincerely thanks Professors Hyunjoon Park and Jeroen Smits for their immense contributions to earlier drafts of this paper. The author also wishes to acknowledge the statistical offices that provided the underlying data making this research possible: Ghana Statistical Services, Ghana.

References

- Adedini, S. A., Odimegwu, C., Imasiku, E. N., & Ononokpono, D. N. (2015). Ethnic differentials in under-five mortality in Nigeria. *Ethnicity & Health*, 20(2), 145-162.
- Alaba, O. O., Olubusoye, O. E., & Olaomi, J. (2017). Spatial patterns and determinants of fertility levels among women of childbearing age in Nigeria. *South African Family Practice*, 59(4), 143-147.
- Bakibinga, P., Mutombo, N., Mukiira, C., Kamande, E., Ezeh, A., & Muga, R. (2016). The influence of religion and ethnicity on family planning approval: A case for women in rural western Kenya. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 55(1), 192-205.
- Bandyopadhyay, S., & Green, E. (2021). Explaining inter-ethnic marriage in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of International Development*, 33(4), 627-643.
- Bessudnov, A., & Monden, C. (2021). Ethnic intermarriage in Russia: The tale of four cities. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 37(4), 383-403.
- Blackwell, D. L., & Lichter, D. T. (2000). Mate selection among married and cohabiting couples. *Journal of Family Issues*, 21(3), 275-302.
- Blackwell, D. L., & Lichter, D. T. (2005). Homogamy among dating, cohabiting and married couples. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 45(4), 719-737.
- Blau, P. M. (1977). A macrosociological theory of social structure. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(1), 26-54.
- Choi, K. H., & Tienda, M. (2017). Marriage-market constraints and mate-selection behavior: Racial, ethnic, and gender differences in intermarriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 79(2), 301-317.
- Crespin-Boucaud, J. (2020). Interethnic and interfaith marriages in sub-Saharan Africa. *World Development*, 125, 104668 – 104681.
- Demarest, L., & Haer, R. (2021). A perfect match? The dampening effect of interethnic marriage on armed conflict in Africa. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 1 – 20.
- Franck, R., & Rainer, I. (2012). Does the leader's ethnicity matter? Ethnic favoritism, education, and health in sub-Saharan Africa. *American Political Science Review*, 106(2), 294-325.
- Ghana Statistical Service. (2013). 2010 Population and Housing Census National Analytical Report."
- Gündüz-Hosgör, A. & Smits, J. (2002). Intermarriage between Turks and Kurds in Contemporary Turkey: Inter-ethnic Relations in an Urbanizing Environment. *European Sociological Review* 18(4):417-432.
- Hwang, S., Saenz, R., & Aguirre, B. (1997). Structural and Assimilationist Explanations of Asian American Intermarriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 59(3):758-772.
- Hwang, S. S., Saenz, R., & Aguirre, B. E. (1995). The SES Selectivity of Interracially Married Asians. *International Migration Review* 29(2):469-491.
- Jacobs, J. A. and Labov, T. G. (2002). Gender Differentials in Intermarriage among Sixteen Race and Ethnic Groups. *Sociological Forum* 17(4):621-646.
- Jones, F. L. (1991). Ethnic Intermarriage in Australia, 1950-52 to 1980-82. *Population Studies* 45(1):27-42.

- Jones, F. L. & Luijkx, F. (1996). Post-war Patterns of Inter-marriage in Australia: the Mediterranean Experience. *European Sociological Review* 12(1):67-86.
- Kalmijn, M. (1998). Inter-marriage and Homogamy: Causes, Patterns and Trends. *Annual Review of Sociology* 24:395-421.
- Kalmijn, M. & van Tubergen, F. (2007). Ethnic Inter-marriage in the Netherlands: Confirmations and Refutations of Accepted Insights. *European Journal of Population* 22(4):371-397.
- (2006). Ethnic Inter-marriage in the Netherlands: Confirmations and Refutations of Accepted Insights. *European Journal of Population* 22(4):371-397.
- Kramon, E., & Posner, D. N. (2016). Ethnic favoritism in education in Kenya. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 11(1), 1-58.
- Kulczycki, A. & Lobo, A. (2002). Patterns, Determinants, and Implications of Inter-marriage among Arab Americans. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 64(1):202-210.
- Lichter, D., Robert, T. A. & Hayward, M.D. (1995). Marriage Markets and Marital Choice. *Journal of Family Issues* 16(4):412-431.
- Lieberman, S., & Waters, M. C. (1988). *From many strands: Ethnic and racial groups in contemporary America*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- McCaa, R. (1993). Ethnic Inter-marriage and Gender in New York City. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24(2):207-231.
- Minnesota Population Center. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International: Version 7.3 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D020.V7.2>
- Mobolaji, J. W., Fatusi, A. O., & Adedini, S. A. (2020). Ethnicity, religious affiliation and girl-child marriage: A cross-sectional study of nationally representative sample of female adolescents in Nigeria. *BMC Public Health*, 20(1), 1-10.
- Monden, C.W. S. & Smits, J. (2005). Ethnic Inter-marriage in Times of Social Change: The Case of Latvia. *Demography* 42(2):323-346.
- Odimegwu, C., & Somefun, O. D. (2017). Ethnicity, gender and risky sexual behaviour among Nigerian youth: An alternative explanation. *Reproductive Health*, 14(1), 1-15.
- Palamuleni, M. E. (2011). Socioeconomic determinants of age at marriage in Malawi. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 3(7), 224-235.
- Schellenberg, J. R. M. A., & Berhanu, D. (2020). Major gaps in child survival by ethnic group. *The Lancet. Global Health*, 8(3), e308-e309.
- Schwartz, C. R., & Mare, R. D. (2005). Trends in educational assortative marriage from 1940 to 2003. *Demography*, 42(4), 621-646.
- Schwartz, C. R. (2013). Trends and variation in assortative mating: Causes and consequences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39, 451-470.
- Shapiro, D., & Tambashe, B. O. (2017). Fertility, ethnicity, and education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. *African Population Studies*, 31(1), 3253-3270.

- Smits, J. (2003). Social Closure among the Higher Educated: Trends in Homogamy in 55 countries. *Social Science Research* 32(2):251-277.
- Smits, J. (2010). Ethnic intermarriage and social cohesion: What can we learn from Yugoslavia? *Social Indicators Research*, 96(3), 417-432.
- Smits, J. Wout, U., & Jan, L. (1998). Educational Homogamy in 65 Countries: An Explanation of Differences in Openness Using Country-Level Explanatory Variables. *American Sociological Review* 63(2):264-285.
- Stier, H., and Yossi, S. (1994). Age at Marriage, Sex-Ratios, and Ethnic Heterogamy. *European Sociological Review* 10(1):79-87.
- Takyi, Baffour K., Nancy B. Miller, Gay C. Kitson and Yaw Oheneba-Sakyi. (2003). Marital Choice in Sub-Saharan Africa: Comparing Structural and Cultural Influences in Contemporary Ghana. *Comparative Sociology* 2(2):375-391.
- Victora, C. G., Barros, A. J., Blumenberg, C., Costa, J. C., Vidaletti, L. P., Wehrmeister, F. C., Masquelier, B., Hug, L. & You, D. (2020). Association between ethnicity and under-5 mortality: Analysis of data from demographic surveys from 36 low-income and middle-income countries. *The Lancet Global Health*, 8(3), e352-e361.

TABLES

Table 4: Logistic Regression Results Predicting Probability of Marriage to a Spouse of a Specific Ethnicity*																
	Akan		Ewe		Ga-Dangbe		Grusi		Guan		Gurma		Mande		Mole-Dagbani	
Coefficient	Odd s Rati o	z	Odd s Rati o	z	Odd s Rati o	z	Odd s Rati o	z	Odd s Rati o	z	Odd s Rati o	z	Odd s Rati o	z	Odd s Rati o	z
Akan	Reference		0.01 2	- 191.35	0.01 8	- 156.85	0.00 2	- 95.47	0.00 4	- 119.47	0.00 1	- 79.26	0.00 3	- 48.64	0.00 4	- 123.58
Ewe	0.02 0	- 178.8 3	Reference		0.01 9	- 117.11	0.00 2	- 64.46	0.00 2	-88.27	0.00 0	- 42.18	0.00 3	- 33.18	0.00 2	-77.63
Ga-Dangbe	0.02 9	- 152.8 8	0.01 5	- 122.75	Reference		0.00 3	- 56.24	0.00 4	-69.01	0.00 1	- 49.34	0.00 4	- 23.58	0.00 3	-67.94
Grusi	0.01 3	- 74.04	0.01 0	-45.79	0.01 4	-37.64	Reference		0.00 6	-41.69	0.00 1	- 32.51	0.00 3	- 31.46	0.00 5	-73.02
Guan	0.01 8	- 101.9 2	0.00 9	-82.74	0.01 6	-57.79	0.00 3	- 50.98	Reference		0.00 1	- 45.54	0.00 2	- 31.82	0.00 5	-63.98
Gurma	0.00 7	- 67.54	0.00 1	-56.25	0.00 3	-35.04	0.00 1	- 44.77	0.00 1	-51.13	Reference		0.00 4	- 38.03	0.00 1	-69.21
Mande	0.01 2	- 41.98	0.01 2	-25.01	0.01 9	-16.81	0.00 2	- 32.26	0.00 2	-30.01	0.00 3	- 36.33	Reference		0.00 6	-52.33
Mole-Dagbani	0.00 9	- 134.2 4	0.00 4	-74.92	0.00 7	-59.07	0.00 4	-90.5	0.00 1	-76.03	0.00 1	- 68.57	0.00 3	- 57.86	Reference	

* Control variables: Year of birth, census year, region, urban, education, and religion