Racial/Ethnic Hierarchies in Same-Sex and Different-Sex Mate Markets

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Abstract

Studies concerning racial/ethnic hierarchies often focus either on gay male and heterosexual mate markets, often disregarding lesbian mate markets. We use recent data from the American Community Survey (ACS) to provide a comprehensive picture of racial/ethnic hierarchies in mate markets by focusing on two general outcomes pertaining to coresidential unions (i.e., cohabiting unions and marriages). First, we assess the extent to which whites are partnered with blacks, Hispanics, and Asians versus whites in same-sex male, same-sex female, and different-sex unions. Alternatively, we consider the extent to which blacks, Hispanics, and Asians are partnered with whites versus someone of the same-race in these different union types. These analyses allow us to compare racial/ethnic hierarchies across heterosexual, gay, and lesbian mate markets. Second, we examine the age gap between partners within different union types, contrasting unions that involve two whites with those involving a white and a black, Hispanic, or Asian partner. We assume that unions involving large age gaps, with the white partner being older than the minority partner, signal an exchange of youth for race/ethnicity. Under such as assumption, age gaps in white-minority unions offer another indicator of racial/ethnic hierarchies.

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Introduction

Over the course of the past two decades, Americans have increasing used the Internet to meet romantic and sexual partners (Rosenfeld and Thomas 2012). The rise of the Internet as a venue for meeting meetings has not only increased rates of partnership, but has also created a new laboratory for understanding racial/ethnic hierarchies. Research concerning online dating preferences continues to provide evidence that heterosexual women and gay men routinely exclude Asian men. For instance, among those seeking a different-sex partner through Yahoo Personals in 2004 to 2005, roughly nine-tenths of white women who stated a racial/ethnic preference in their online profile did not check the box for Asian, in comparison to about half of all men (Robnett and Feliciano 2011). Among same-sex male daters with a stated racial/ethnic preference, Asian men were far more likely than white, black, or Hispanic men to exclude their own race. Similarly, white, black, and Hispanic men were the least open to having Asian partners (versus white, black, and Hispanic partners).

Social science researchers have also relied on population-based surveys to discern racial/ethnic hierarchies. Reflecting the design of large-scale surveys like the American Community Survey (ACS), most of these studies focus on coresidential unions (i.e., cohabiting and marital unions). Asians are often excluded from studies examining how union status differs by race/ethnicity, reflecting the relatively small number of Asians in many surveys (for an exception see Brown et al. 2018). As in studies of online dating, population-based studies suggest that Asian men are excluded by heterosexual women. As evidence of this, Asian men were found to be the least likely of any racial group of men and women to have an ongoing

sexual or romantic relationship in a sample of young adults between the ages of 25 and 32 (Balistreri et al. 2015). While this could reflect the relatively late entry of Asian males into relationships, individuals typically begin forming romantic relationships in adolescence (Carver et al. 2003). Studies concerning the racial mix of partners in different-sex coresidential unions have more routinely included Asians. One of the most frequently documented patterns in these studies is that Asian men are far less likely than Asian women to have a different-race partner and that black men are far more likely than black women to be interracially partnered (Qian and Lichter 2007).

A handful of population-based studies have compared racial/ethnic matching within same-sex versus different-sex couples (e.g., Jepson and Jepsen 2012; Schwartz and Graf 2009). These studies find that same-sex male couples are the most likely to be interracial and different-sex couples are the least likely, with same-sex unions falling between these two groups, a pattern that has been documented across several decades (Schwartz and Graf 2009). To our knowledge, population-based studies have yet to examine whether this pattern holds across different racial/ethnic groups. Thus, it is not known whether patterns of exclusion documented for different-sex coresidential unions are similar for same-sex coresidential unions. Although studies of online dating offer important insights into racial/ethnic hierarchies (Rafalow et al. 2017), they typically focus exclusively on same-sex or different-sex daters, and often on a particular racial group (e.g., whites or Asians). Thus, it is not clear whether Asian males experience the same degree of exclusion on different-sex and same-sex dating markets. Prior studies of same-sex couples have not explicitly considered the role of other characteristics in offsetting race/ethnicity, such as education and youth, in contrast to a raft of studies on different-sex couples.

This study fills an important gap in knowledge on racial/ethnic hierarchies, particularly the exclusion of Asian men, using data on coresidential unions of adults in the ACS. We use a two-pronged approach to assessing patterns of exclusion. First, we consider the extent to which white men and women are partnered with blacks, Hispanics, and Asian when in same-sex versus different-sex unions. We also explore the frequency to which black, Hispanic, and Asian men and women are partnered with whites when in same-sex versus different-sex unions. Second, we examine the age gap between partners in different couple types (e.g., couples involving a white male and an Asian male versus two white males). This last approach builds on prior studies that suggest white men exchange their race/ethnicity for youth when partnered with women who are racial minorities (Balistreri et al. 2017). To help situate our findings, we provide a rich overview of the ways prior studies have captured exclusion and exchange in mate markets and the theories from which they draw.

Background

Scholars believe that racial hierarchies facilitate or impede the formation of cross-race relationships. For social ties more generally, they have posited the intersectionality of multiple types (race, gender, class, etc.) of hierarchies. Some scholars specify a hierarchy that places whites above non-whites (Waters 1990), while others point to hierarchy that places non-blacks above blacks (Yancey 2003). Still others evoke images of a more complex racial hierarchy by moving away from a dichotomous view (white/non-white or black/non-black) of race. For example, Bonilla-Silva (2004, p. 933) argues for an emergent tri-racial system that encompasses the following groups: whites (e.g., light-skinned Hispanics and assimilated Native Americans); honorary whites (e.g., Chinese Americans); and collective blacks (e.g., dark-skinned Hispanics

and blacks). Dominant racial groups have a stake in crafting categories of difference that reinforce the status quo (Omi and Winant 1984). For instance, racial stereotypes and anti-miscegenation laws were employed by whites as far back as the 1800s as a response to a growing number of Asians who were perceived to be an economic and sexual threat (Tsunokai 2014).

Perspectives on interracial marriage were introduced during a time when interracial relationships were prohibited. Merton (1941) and Davis (1941) were the first scholars to argue that interracial relationships involve the exchange of race with other valued resources (i.e., education, youth, and expedited sex). Marriages between black men and less educated white women are the quintessential example of the exchange of social class for racial caste (Kalmijn 1998). The logic behind exchange theory was that for white women to form a taboo relationship (i.e., one with a black man) they would have to be compensated in terms of economic or social status. The assumption that interracial relationships involve exchange is not only found in sociology but also in economics and psychology. For instance, a theory in social psychology suggests that in contexts prohibiting interracial involvement, some strong force or attraction is required to draw partners together (Murstein, Merighi, and Malloy 1989). Childs (2009) also noted that films featuring interracial couples include the recurring theme that the minority partner is exceptional in some way. The fact that a minority must offset their race with some other valued resource in order to compensate a partner with a white is evidence of the existence of one or multiple racial hierarchy/hierarchies (Gullickson and Fu 2010).

Scholars studying racial/ethnic hierarchies within the context of romantic and sexual relationships suggest that these hierarchies are gendered. The most compelling evidence for gendered racial hierarchies is the sex gaps in interracial marriage documented for blacks and Asians, gaps that are consistent with stereotypes of black men and Asian women. As many

scholars note, black men are often depicted as hypermasculine and Asian women are described as feminine and submissive. Conversely, Asian men are portrayed as emasculated and black women as less feminine (Lin and Lundquist 2013). A growing number of qualitative studies suggest that these stereotypes shape choices in the race/ethnicity of mates. Nemoto (2009) conducted interviews of couples with Asians and whites and Asian women were highly sought after by white men because they were perceived as more feminine than other women in terms of their personalities and physiques. Men who prefer Asian women are commonly termed as having "yellow fever." More recently, Vasquez-Tokos (2017) interviewed Hispanics and their partners who were in both same-race and different-race marriages and found evidence that many white men valued Hispanic women for embodying stereotypical feminine characteristics. Some Asian women views Asian men as deficient using the yardstick of white masculinity that featured a bigger body (Nemoto 2009). McClintock (2010) interviewed students at Stanford about their experiences hooking up and noted that some black males felt they were viewed as "objects of sexual novelty" by white women.

Research concerning racial hierarchies in same-sex mate markets has focused largely on gay men. Several studies suggest that gay men who are racial minorities experience "sexual racism" (Han and Choi 2018). Race is found to be a marker of desirability that cuts across gay social locations. In fact, race/ethnicity can negate other characteristics deemed desirable on same-sex mating markets. Gay mate markets place a premium value on whiteness, especially white masculinity, and this premium is observed in the online preferences and profile texts of black, Hispanic, and Asian men (Rafalow et al. 2017). Gay men who are racial minorities are found to be cognizant of a hierarchy that places whites and Hispanics above Asians and blacks (Robinson 2015; Tan et al. 2013). The same stereotypes of Asian and black

men depicted in qualitative studies of heterosexuals also pervade profiles on gay websites.

Much of what we know about gendered racial hierarchies and sexual racism is based on studies of online dating. These studies identify hierarchies in different ways (e.g., profiles, texts, contacts, and responses), take different frames of reference (e.g., white male versus Asian male), and focus on different websites and locations. What unites some of these studies is an ability to remove the confounding influence of context. After all, Internet dating does not require physical proximity (Lin and Lundquist 2013). While studies of online dating have this comparative advantage, it is difficult to extrapolate from them given their diverse samples, methods, and contrasts. These studies usually do not consider how race intersects with characteristics other than gender. In an exception, Lin and Lundquist (2013) found that white women, regardless of their level of education, are more likely to contact non college-educated white men than college-educated Asian men. This is consistent with the evidence from qualitative studies of gay mate markets that race-ethnicity can negate other valued characteristics.

Research using population-based samples of coresidential couples faces a serious challenge in ascertaining racial hierarchies: racial groups differ widely in their opportunities for different-race contact. For instance, an Asian is much more likely to encounter individuals of different racial groups than is a white. According to the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS), approximately 18% of the total population was Hispanic, 12% was non-Hispanic black, 5% was non-Hispanic Asian, and just 62% was non-Hispanic white. Studies have proxied opportunities for contact by measuring the relative size of different groups in the communities of couples (Choi and Tienda 2017). The difficulty capturing opportunities for interracial contact make within-racial group comparisons appealing if we make a somewhat questionable assumption that men and women of different racial groups have equal opportunities for

interracial contact. For instance, the finding that Asian women are more likely than Asian men to have a different-race partner is evidence of a gendered racial hierarchy. We could also assume that men seeking same-sex partners have the same opportunity for interracial contact as men seeking different-sex partners. As we discuss below, this assumption is even more problematic.

Studies focused on coresidential unions continue to document the greatest percentage of interracial involvement among same-sex male couples, followed by same-sex female couples, then different-sex cohabiting couples, with different-sex married couples having the lowest percentage (Jepson and Jepsen 2012; Schwartz and Graf 2009). Several explanations have been offered for the gaps between same-sex and different-sex couples. One common explanation is that gay and lesbian individuals have to cast a wide net in choosing a partner because potential partners are scarce in the population. Schwartz and Graf (2009) measured the supply of potential same-sex mates using the same-sex couple concentration in metropolitan areas, predicting that male and female couples would be less likely to cross racial lines in areas where same-sex couples flourished. Contrary to their expectations, they found same-sex concentration to have the opposite effect: greater concentrations of same-sex couples *increased* cross-race partnering for same-sex and different-sex couples alike. They concluded that same-sex couple concentration was an indicator of unmeasured characteristics of places that facilitate interracial partnering, such as "liberalness, tolerance, diversity, and/or population concentration" (Schwartz and Graf 2009, p. 34). Meier, Hull, and Ortyl (2009) found evidence that sexual minorities as a group may be more tolerant. Gay men and lesbians were more likely than heterosexuals to endorse the idea that difference-race couples could be just as successful as same-race couples in a sample of individuals between the ages of 18 and 24.

Men in same-sex couples are more likely to be interracially partnered than women in same-sex couples. One explanation for this is that gay men are more likely than lesbians to be geographically mobile (Rosenfeld and Kim 2005). They are also more likely reside in urban areas that happen to be more diverse (Black et al. 2000). In addition, gay men are more likely than lesbian women to meet a partner over the Internet, a venue that reduces the salience of geographic divides between groups (Rosenfeld and Thomas 2012). Same-sex female unions often evolve from friendships rather than a concerted effort to find a same-sex female mate (Diamond 2008). Finally, men may be more likely to seek out different-race partners when confronting a scarce mate pool. As evidence of this, Choi and Tienda (2017) found that minority men were more responsive than minority women to relative group size. These findings underscore the importance of controlling for factors such as relative group size.

As illustrated above, prior studies using population-based samples have compared the percentages of couples that are interracial across different union types, typically same-sex female cohabiting unions, same-sex male cohabiting unions, different-sex cohabiting unions, and different-sex married unions. Alternatively, they have compared different racial groups of men and women in different-sex cohabiting unions and married unions with respect to the percentages having a partners from different race-ethnic groups. In sum, prior studies suggest that some groups (e.g., Asian men) are excluded from both same-sex and different-sex markets, but they do not offer a comprehensive picture of racial-ethnic hierarchies.

Analysis Plan

This study consists of two sets of analyses. In the first set of descriptive analyses, we focus on whites and compare how men and women with same-sex versus different-sex partners

compare in their likelihood of having a white, black, Hispanic, or Asian partner. We also compare how minority men and women with same-sex and different-sex partners differ in their likelihood of having a white partner in analyses focused on blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. These analyses reveal whether patterns for prior studies of coresidential unions persist when highlighting specific types of interracial unions: unions of whites partnered with blacks, Hispanics, or Asians. We also estimate multinomial logistic regression models for all four racial groups that enable us to compare the likelihood of being in a white-minority union (versus a same-race union) for all men and women in same-sex and different-sex unions before and after taking into account factors such as relative group size. Additional analyses enable us to consider partner choices using a counterfactual scenario in which whites have equal opportunities for contact with all four racial groups. In the second set of analyses, we examine the average age gap between partners that involve either same-race couples or white-minority combinations (e.g., Asian-white male couple). We focus on age because it is a factor that is arguably discernable from online profiles and face-to-face interactions, like race/ethnicity.

Data

We use the 5-year sample (2012-2016) of the American Community Survey from IPUMS. To identify same-sex and different-sex couples in the data, we rely on a constructed IPUMS family interrelationship variables. In 2017, IPUMS revised the family interrelationship variables to include same-sex couples and cohabiting couples. A key feature of this revision is that when deciding among multiple potential partner links, household order is rarely used. To link couples, IPUMS first links those where there is only one potential spouse or partner. In households where there are multiple potential spouses, different sex links are given priority over

same-sex links. Households that contain multiple same-sex couples are not paired in the IPUMS data because there are not sufficient information to establish a link (Ruggles et al. 2017). Our analyses exclude individuals living in group quarters and those who are under 20 years of age, leading to sample size of 11,344,260 individuals. We also exclude respondents who indicated they were "married, spouse-absent" or indicated that they were other-race or multiple races, resulting in a sample of 10,871,419 cases. Finally, we limit the sample to only those respondents who have a spouse or cohabiting partner, excluding those who have an "other" race or multiracial partner (6,805,589 cases).

Variables

Individual-level variables. IPUMS race and Hispanic ethnicity variables are used to construct the categories of non-Hispanic (NH) white, NH black, and NH Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Other Asian or Pacific Islander). Hispanics may be of any race. Highest educational attainment is measured as less than high school, high school graduate, bachelor's degree, or advanced degree (Master's degree or higher). Native born in US / Born abroad to American parents are considered native born.

PUMA-level variables. The contextual variables are taken from the 2009 ACS 1.0% sample. We use this earlier year to be consistent with prior studies (Choi and Tienda 2017). Characteristics are aggregated at the level of the Consistent Public Use Microdata Area which is the smallest geographic units that can be consistently identified from the geographic codes available in the US Census PUMS. Codes obtained from the USDA Economic Research Service were used to construct the "creative class" indicator that captures tolerance in the area. The creative class is the share of population that is employed in occupations that require "thinking

creatively" such as chief executives, public relations, advertising managers, architects, artists, and engineers (McGranahan and Wojan 2007).

Results

The first panel of Table 1 is restricted to white respondents who were coresiding at the time of interview and shows the percent that had a white, black, Hispanic, or Asian partner. As suggested earlier, we distinguish four couple types: men in different-sex unions; women in different-sex unions; men in same-sex union, and women in same-sex unions. Results from this table reveal that white men are significantly less likely than white women to have a white partner (94.9% versus 95.6%), but this difference is somewhat small in magnitude. Consistent with prior studies, we find that white men are less likely than white women to have a black partner (0.4% versus 1.0%) and white women are less likely than white men to have an Asian partner (0.5% versus 1.6%). Also in line with prior studies, we find that among men and women with a different-race partner, the most frequent race of partner is Hispanic (3.2% for men and 2.8% for women). Keep in mind the estimates are lower than those in previous studies that were restricted to younger and/or newlywed couples.

[Table 1 about here.]

As stated earlier, we break new ground by showing the distribution of partner race/ethnicity for men and women with same-sex partners. Recall that prior studies found that men with same-sex partners were most likely to have a different-race partner and respondents with different-sex partners were the least likely to have a difference-race partner. Women with a same-sex partner fell between these other two groups. Comparing the four couple groups of white respondents with respect to the race of partner, we find this same general pattern.

Specifically, men with a same-sex partner are the group most likely to have a black, Hispanic, or Asian partner. Women with a same-sex partner are more likely than both men and women with a different-sex partner to have a black or Hispanic partner but not an Asian partner. Women with a same-sex partner are more likely than women with a different-sex partner to have an Asian partner but less likely than men with different-sex partners to do so. Figure 1 shows confidence intervals for these estimates and demonstrates a considerable degree of precision in these estimates.

[Figure 1 about here.]

The remaining panels of Table 1 show the percent of black, Hispanic, and Asian respondents who have a white partner. Once again, we contrast the four couple types for these estimates. The patterns are generally consistent with the results in Table 1. Among black respondents, men with same-sex partners are the most likely to have a white partner (25.0%), followed by women with same-sex partners (11.5%), men with different-sex partners (10.4%), and finally women with different-sex partners (4,2%); however, the gap between women with same-sex partners and men with different-sex partners is small. Among Hispanics, the big distinction is between respondents with same-sex and different-sex partners. Specifically, 15.6% of men and 17.0% of women with a different-sex partner have a white partner, in comparison to 30.0% and 28.6% of men and women with a same-sex partner. Differences across couple types are most pronounced among Asian respondents. Asian men in same-sex unions are most likely to have white partner (37.2%) and Asian men in different-sex unions are the least likely (7.3%), with women in same-sex and different-sex unions falling in between these groups (20.0% and 18.3%, respectively).

Table 2 shows sample statistics for the independent variables in our model for the four

different couple types. It also indicates whether respondents in same-sex unions differ significantly from their same-sex counterparts in different-sex unions. Men and women in different-sex unions are slightly older than their counterparts in same-sex unions ($p < .05$). For instance, the average age of men in different-sex unions is 51.2 while the average age of men in same-sex unions is 47.4. Men and women in different-sex unions also have lower levels of educational attainment than their counterparts in same-sex unions. To offer just one indicator, 13.6% of men and 12.7% of women with a different-sex partner have an advanced degree (e.g., masters), in comparison to 18.7% of men and 20.2% of women with a same-sex partner. Women with same-sex partners are the least likely of the four groups to be immigrants. Among those with different-sex partners, 18.2% of the men and 18.5% of the women were born in another country. Among those with same-sex partners, 19.7% of the men and 10.2% of the women were foreign-born.

[Table 2 about here.]

With respect to the variables that correspond to PUMA, respondents in different-sex unions reside in contexts that have fewer immigrants than do their counterparts in same-sex unions. On average, men and women with different-sex partners reside in communities that are 11.4% and 11.3% immigrant, respectively; men and women with same-sex partners reside in communities that are 15.2% and 12.5% immigrant. Respondents with different-sex partners also reside in communities with smaller minority populations. Specifically, men and women in different-sex unions live in communities that are 72.1% and 72.3% white; men and women in same-sex unions live in communities that are 65.7% and 69.8% white. Finally, respondents with different-sex partners also reside in communities with fewer members of the creative class. For instance, 29.6% of the respondents in the communities of men with a different-sex partner are

members of the creative class in comparison to 32.9% of the communities of men with a same-sex partner. These differences across couple types in the independent variables above underline the need to control for these variables in models contrasting these four groups of respondents.

The results from Table 1 do not take into account the fact respondents in the four couple types differ in terms of individual and contextual characteristics, as illustrated in Table 2. Table 3 shows results from multinomial logit models estimates for whites that predict having a black, Hispanic, or Asian partner (versus a white partner). The first set of models includes three indicator variables for couple type, with men in different-sex couples serving as the omitted reference category. Next, we add the individual and contextual characteristics. Results from the first set parallel those in Table 1 except they contrast the likelihood of having a black versus a white partner rather than simply addressing the likelihood of having a black partner. They also quantify differences between the groups in terms of log odds. Positive coefficients for a given variable indicate higher log odds of having a specific race partner, while negative coefficients indicate lower log odds.

[Table 3 about here.]

The patterns shown in this table are, for the most part, consistent with those in Table 1. To offer one example, white men and women with same-sex partners have significantly higher log odds of having a black or Hispanic partner in comparison to white men with different-sex partners. Furthermore, the relative size of the coefficients further indicate that white men in same-sex unions are more likely than white women in same-sex unions to have a black or Hispanic partner. Once again, we see that white men with same-sex partners are most likely to have an Asian partner, followed by white men with different-sex partners, and then white women with same-sex partners, leaving white women with different-sex partners the least likely to have

an Asian partner. But the gap between white women with same-sex and different-sex partners in the log odds of having an Asian partner is relatively small.

Next, we consider how the couple type indicators change before and after the additional set of variables is added. Here we see the patterns persist, but in most cases, the coefficients for men and women in same-sex unions decrease. This suggests that white men and women in same-sex unions are more likely to have a different-race partner in part because of their own characteristics and those of their PUMAs. Still, some substantial gaps remain. For instance, compared to white men in a different-sex union, white men in a same-sex union have odds of having a black partner that are almost five times higher (i.e., 4.67 = exp (1.54)) and odds of having a Hispanic partner that are over 70% greater (i.e., (1.73 – 1) * 100 = 1.73 = exp (0.55)). But their chances of an Asian partner are only about 16% greater. Interestingly, gaps between respondents in same-sex and different-sex unions are greatest for black partners.

Table 4 shows results from multinomial logit models estimated for blacks, Hispanics, and Asians that predict having white partner (versus a same-race partner). Regardless of race/ethnicity, men in same-sex unions are most likely to have a white partner and respondents in different-sex unions are the least likely, with women in same-sex unions falling between these two groups. However, among blacks the gap between women in same-sex unions and men in different-sex unions is only marginally significant. A comparison of these patterns with those in in the previous table reveals that individual and contextual factors appear to figure less prominently into the gaps for minority respondents than for white respondents. With the set of control variables, respondents in a same-sex union are significantly ($p < .05$) more likely than men in a different-sex union to have a white partner, with the exception of black women in a same-sex union. Still, some large gaps remain, particularly for Asians. Asian men in a same-sex

union have over ten times the odds of having a white partner as Asian men in a different-sex union, and Asian women in a same-sex union have over three times the odds as Asian men in a different-sex union.

[Table 4 about here.]

These descriptive and multivariate results are consistent with those of previous studies that document the highest level of interracial coupling among same-sex male couples. But they do not directly reveal racial/ethnic hierarchies *within* different couple types. For instance, to what extent do white men favor white men over different-race men when in PUMAs with equal percentages of whites, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians? To determine this, we computed predicted probabilities that white men in same-sex unions have white, black, Hispanic, and Asian partners based on the multivariate model estimated in Table 3; however, this model was estimated for the four different couple types (e.g., white men in same-sex unions). We first estimated probabilities using mean values for the four couple types to approximate (with some distortion) the results in Table 1 (Muller and MacLehose 2014). Next, we estimated these probabilities using the mean values for white men in different-sex unions so that four couple types were similar in their characteristics. Finally, we estimated probabilities by equalizing the percentages of the four different racial groups in PUMAs. These probabilities are displayed in Table 5 as percentages.

[Table 5 about here.]

We focus first on the results for white men with same-sex partners because they exhibit the most pronounced hierarchies. As in Table 1, these predicted percentages revealed that white men with same-sex partners were most likely to be partnered with white men (with 89.9% predicted to do so), followed by Hispanics (6.1%), Asians (2.0%), and blacks (1.9%). After equalizing the percentages of the four different racial groups in PUMAs, white men were still

most likely to be partnered with white men (with 79.0% predicted to do so), followed by Hispanics (11.3%), Asians (6.2%), and blacks (3.6%). Of course, these estimates do not take into account the fact that white men are closer to Asian men than black men in terms of SES and that Hispanics vary with respect to race. Nor do they take into account residential segregation.

Scholars have long assumed that the exchange of characteristics valued in a mate for race/ethnicity is indicative of gendered racial hierarchies. Figure 3 shows the point estimates and confidence intervals for age gaps between partners for couples that involve whites. Each of the four couple types is showcased in a separate graph. Reflecting large sample sizes in the ACS, the confidence intervals for different-sex unions are small. The patterns in Figure 3.A are especially striking. Unions involving an Asian man and a white man have an age gap that is over six years, with the white man being older than the Asian man. The average gap for white men partnered with white men is around zero years. This is just another indicator of how Asian men fare in racial hierarchies among gay men.

[Figure 3 about here.]

Conclusion

A recurring finding from studies using Internet and population-based studies is that Asian men are marginalized from heterosexual and gay mate markets; however, studies concerning racial/ethnic hierarchies are limited due to their focus on either different-sex partnering or same-sex partnering. We used recent data from the American Community Survey (ACS) to provide a comprehensive picture of racial/ethnic hierarchies in mate markets by focusing on two general outcomes involving coresidential unions (i.e., cohabitation and marriage). First, we assessed the extent to which whites were partnered with blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, and alternatively, the extent to which blacks, Hispanics, and Asians were partnered with whites. In examining

partnering between whites and minorities, we contrasted four different groups of ACS respondents: men in different-sex unions; women in different-sex unions; men in same-sex union, and women in same-sex unions. Second, we examined the age gap between partners within these four different union types, comparing unions that involved two whites with those that involved a white partner and a black, Hispanic, or Asian partner.

Prior studies found evidence that same-sex male unions were most likely to be interracial and that different-sex unions were the least likely to be interracial, with same-sex female unions falling between these two other union types (Jepson and Jepsen 2012; Schwartz and Graf 2009). Yet, these studies did not differentiate men and women with different-sex partners, nor did they differentiate the race/ethnicity of respondents and their partners. We find evidence among whites that men with a same-sex partner are the group most likely to have a black, Hispanic, and Asian partner (versus a white partner). Similarly, we find evidence among blacks, Hispanics, and Asians that men with a same-sex partner are the group most likely to have a white partner (versus a same-race partner).

With the addition of the control variables, the gaps between men with a same-sex partner and the other three groups decreased for whites but not for minorities. The multivariate analyses suggested that white men with a same-sex partner were more likely than respondents in other groups to have a different race partner in part because of their own characteristics or characteristics of their PUMA. The rank ordering of the other three groups was less consistent, but in most instances minority-white pairings were more common for women with same-sex female partners than for men and women with different-sex partners to have a black or Hispanic partner.

Previous studies have also demonstrated that age gaps between partners are greater in same-sex unions than in different-sex unions (Jepson and Jepsen 2012; Schwartz and Graf 2009). These studies computed the absolute value of the age gap between partners. In contrast, we subtracted the female partner's age from the male partner's for different-sex couples and the minority partner's age from the white partner's for same-sex couples. For same-sex couples involving two whites, we randomly selected one partner and subtracted their age from the age of their partner. These analyses revealed that in same-sex male unions, but not other couple types, whites were substantially older when partnered with blacks, Hispanics, and Asians.

Our findings offered mixed support for the notion that Asian men were marginalized from mate markets. For instance, in the descriptive analyses of minorities, Asian men in same-sex unions were the group most likely to have a white partner, whereas Asian men in different-sex unions were among the groups least likely to have a white partner. When we examined hierarchies from the vantage point of white men in same-sex unions, the patterns were more complex. We plan to devise strategies for better elucidating hierarchies and to streamline the analyses prior to the PAA Meetings. We also plan to examine regional variation in the hierarchies.

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Figure 1. 95% Confidence Intervals for Percent with Partner of a Specific Race

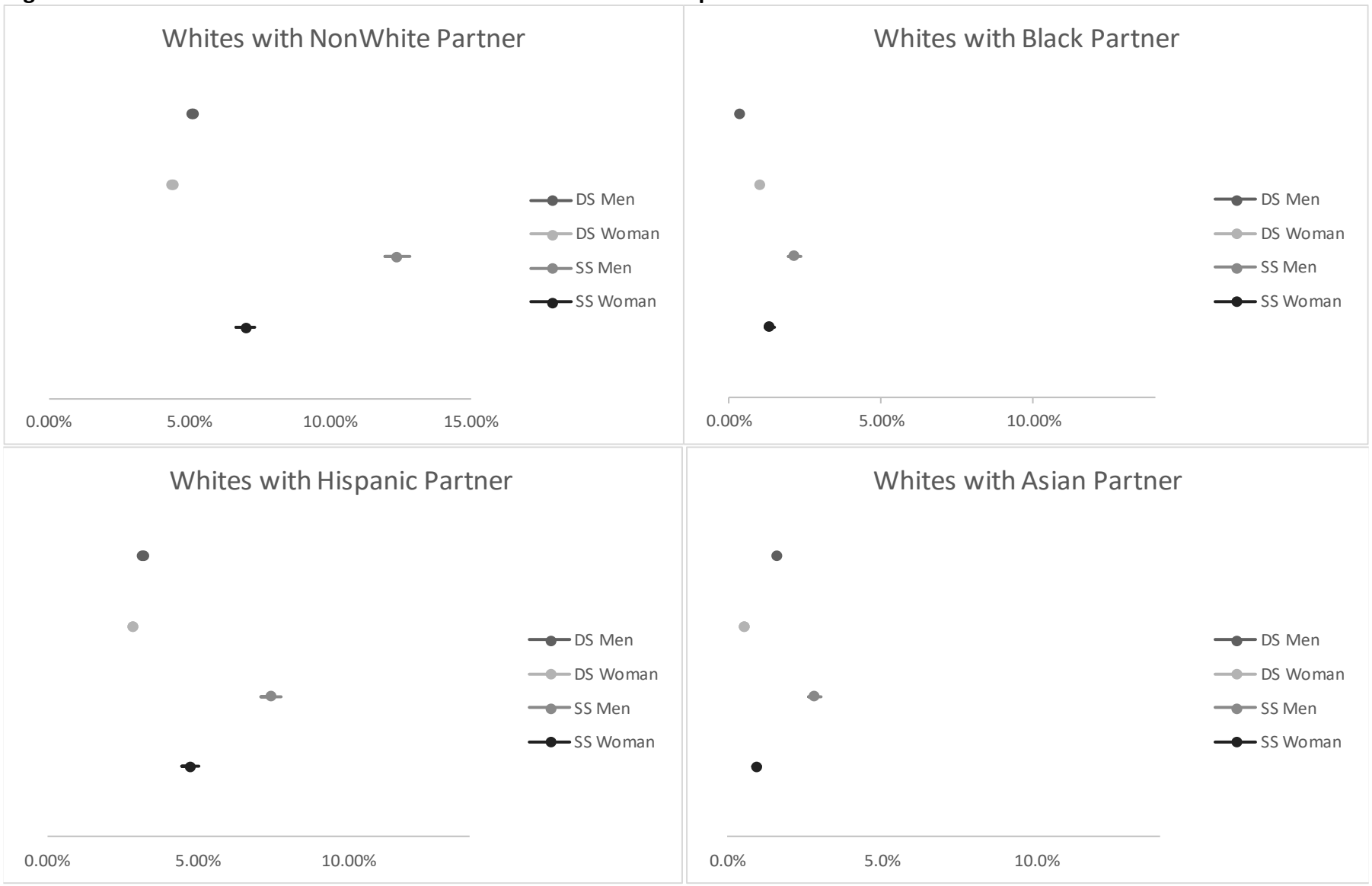

Figure 2. Age Gaps for Select Couple Types

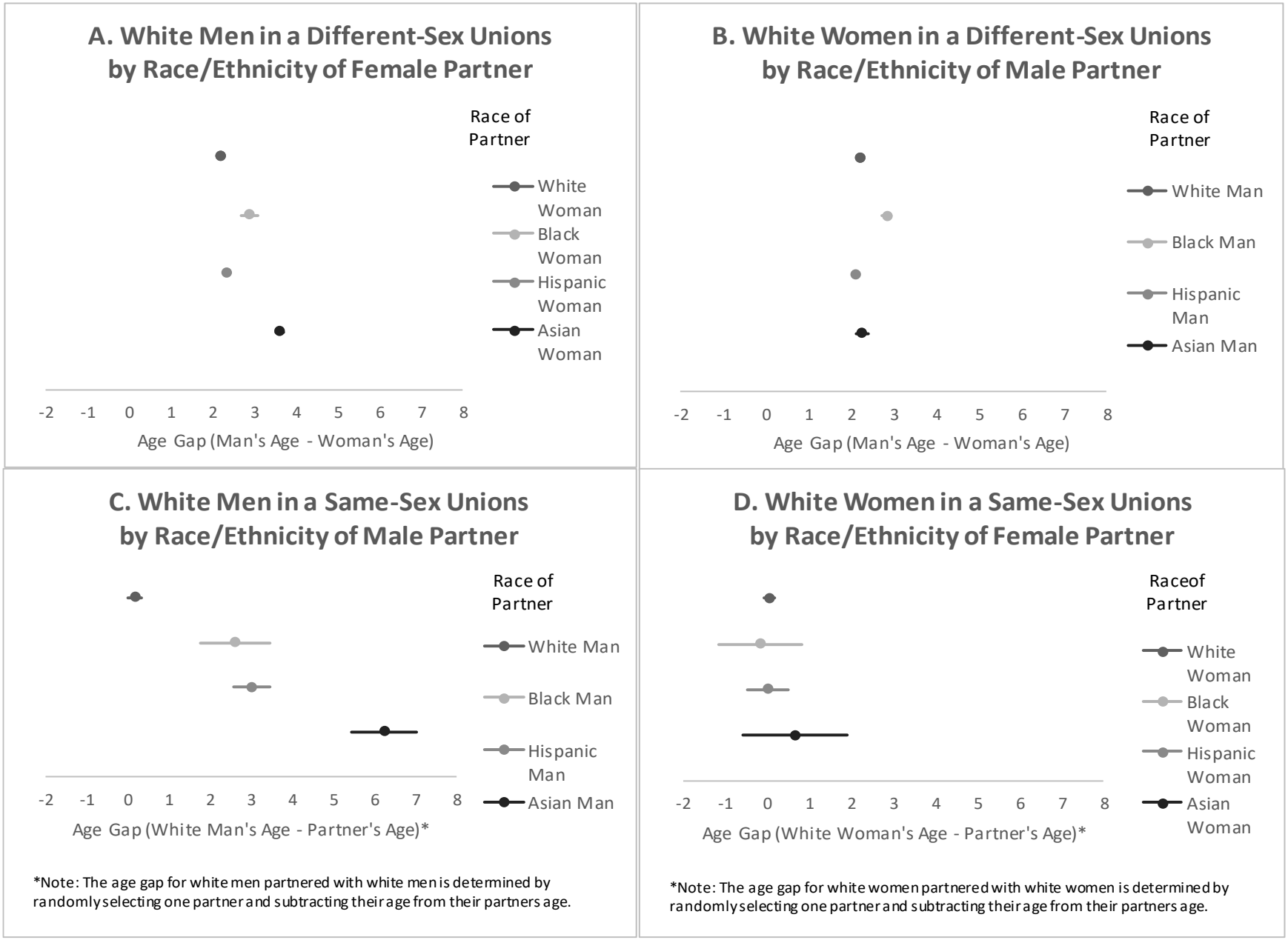

Table 1. Observed Percentages of Respondents Having a Partner of a Given Race

	Percent with Partner of Given Race			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Whites				
Men in DS Unions	94.9%	0.4%	3.2%	1.6%
Women in DS Unions	95.6%	1.0%	2.8%	0.5%
Men in SS Unions	87.6%	2.2%	7.4%	2.8%
Women in SS Unions	93.0%	1.3%	4.7%	0.9%
	Percent with Partner of Given Race			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Blacks				
Men in DS Unions	10.4%	84.5%	3.9%	1.2%
Women in DS Unions	4.2%	94.0%	1.6%	0.2%
Men in SS Unions	25.0%	69.4%	4.8%	0.9%
Women in SS Unions	11.5%	82.7%	5.1%	0.7%
	Percent with Partner of Given Race			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Hispanics				
Men in DS Unions	15.6%	0.8%	82.6%	1.1%
Women in DS Unions	17.0%	2.0%	80.3%	0.7%
Men in SS Unions	30.0%	1.4%	67.3%	1.3%
Women in SS Unions	28.6%	3.3%	66.7%	1.4%
	Percent with Partner of Given Race			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Asians				
Men in DS Unions	7.3%	1.3%	1.7%	90.8%
Women in DS Unions	18.3%	1.0%	2.2%	78.2%
Men in SS Unions	37.2%	1.9%	4.3%	57.5%
Women in SS Unions	20.0%	0.0%	5.0%	73.1%

Table 2. Means and Proportions for Four Couple Types

	Different-Sex Unions		Same-Sex Unions			
Variable	Men	Women	Men		Women	
Respondent-level						
White	0.721	0.722	0.687	*	0.739	*
Black	0.079	0.070	0.067	*	0.094	*
Hispanic	0.144	0.142	0.190	*	0.129	*
Asian	0.057	0.066	0.055		0.038	*
Age	51.242	49.046	47.357	*	47.021	*
Less than high school	0.120	0.100	0.100	*	0.076	*
High school degree	0.265	0.257	0.191	*	0.199	*
Some college	0.280	0.305	0.275		0.305	
Bachelor's degree	0.199	0.212	0.248	*	0.216	
Advanced degree	0.136	0.127	0.187	*	0.202	*
Foreign-born	0.182	0.185	0.197	*	0.102	*
PUMA-level						
Percent foreign-born	11.383	11.313	15.231	*	12.482	*
Percent white	72.102	72.272	65.675	*	69.810	*
Percent black	9.546	9.514	11.562	*	10.583	*
Percent Hispanic	13.541	13.413	16.258	*	14.252	*
Percent Asian	4.811	4.801	6.505	*	5.356	*
Percent creative class	29.590	29.602	32.818	*	30.959	*
Region of country						
Northeast	0.177	0.177	0.209	*	0.203	*
Midwest	0.223	0.225	0.164	*	0.191	*
South	0.370	0.369	0.344	*	0.345	*
West	0.230	0.229	0.282	*	0.261	*
N of Cases	3,360,403	3,356,330	44,305		44,551	

* $p < .05$ (test of difference between those in SS unions and their SS counterparts in DS unions).

Table 3. Multinomial Logit Results for Whites of Having a Partner of a Given Race Versus a White Partner (N = 5,231,807)

	Black v. White Partner				Hispanic v. White Partner				Asian v. White Partner			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
Union Type												
Men in DS Unions	---		---		---		---		---		---	
Women in DS Unions	1.023	***	0.950	***	-0.116	***	-0.184	***	-1.068	***	-1.109	***
Men in SS Unions	1.848	***	1.541	***	0.930	***	0.548	***	0.664	***	0.147	***
Women in SS Unions	1.304	***	1.081	***	0.423	***	0.136	***	-0.494	***	-0.845	***
Control Variables												
Age	---		-0.042	***	---		-0.036	***	---		-0.018	***
Less than high school	---		---		---		---		---		---	
High school degree	---		-0.180	***	---		-0.064	***	---		0.392	***
Some college	---		-0.165	***	---		0.001		---		0.785	***
Bachelor's degree	---		-0.672	***	---		-0.288	***	---		0.934	***
Advanced degree	---		-0.554	***	---		-0.277	***	---		1.202	***
Foreign-born	---		0.093	**	---		-0.303	***	---		-0.096	***
Percent foreign-born	---		0.003	#	---		0.000		---		0.003	**
Percent white	---		---		---		---		---		---	
Percent black	---		0.034	***	---		0.009	***	---		0.017	***
Percent Hispanic	---		0.019	***	---		0.046	***	---		0.018	***
Percent Asian	---		0.022	***	---		0.018	***	---		0.050	***
Percent creative class	---		0.012	***	---		0.023	***	---		0.024	***
Northeast	---		---		---		---		---		---	
Midwest	---		0.073	**	---		-0.066	***	---		-0.024	
South	---		-0.017		---		0.081	***	---		-0.042	*
West	---		-0.111	***	---		0.345	***	---		0.573	***
Intercept	-5.552	***	-4.214	***	-3.401	***	-3.105	***	-4.096	***	-5.548	***

Table 4. Multinomial Logit Results for Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians of Having a White Partner Versus Same-Race Partner

	Black Respondents				Hispanic Respondents				Asian Respondents			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
Union Type												
Men in DS Unions	---		---		---		---		---		---	
Women in DS Unions	-1.022	***	-1.104	***	0.116	***	0.041	***	1.073	***	1.186	***
Men in SS Unions	1.071	***	1.041	***	0.860	***	0.837	***	2.091	***	2.290	***
Women in SS Unions	0.117	#	-0.112		0.820	***	0.331	***	1.231	***	1.167	***
Control Variables												
Age	---		-0.032	***	---		0.009	***	---		0.004	***
Less than high school	---		---		---		---		---		---	
High school degree	---		0.010		---		0.934	***	---		0.655	***
Some college	---		0.160	***	---		1.540	***	---		1.043	***
Bachelor's degree	---		0.358	***	---		2.062	***	---		0.843	***
Advanced degree	---		0.405	***	---		2.304	***	---		0.829	***
Foreign-born	---		-0.623	***	---		-1.420	***	---		-1.543	***
Percent foreign-born	---		-0.001		---		-0.002	*	---		-0.023	***
Percent white	---		0.053	***	---		0.042	***	---		0.037	***
Percent black	---		---		---		0.026	***	---		0.024	***
Percent Hispanic	---		0.038	***	---		---		---		0.023	***
Percent Asian	---		0.034	***	---		0.030	***	---		---	***
Percent creative class	---		0.003	*	---		-0.003	***	---		-0.003	
Northeast	---		---		---		---		---		---	
Midwest	---		-0.134	***	---		0.318	***	---		0.142	***
South	---		-0.553	***	---		0.185	***	---		0.332	***
West	---		0.442	***	---		0.438	***	---		0.648	***
Intercept	-2.094	***	-4.543	***	-1.668	***	-5.630	***	-2.527	***	-5.067	***
N of cases	416,296		416,296		782,289		782,289		375,197		375,197	

Table 5. Predicted Percentages for Whites of Having a Partner of a Given Race

	Percent with Partner of Given Race			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Observed Percentages				
Men in DS Unions	94.9%	0.4%	3.2%	1.6%
Women in DS Unions	95.6%	1.0%	2.8%	0.5%
Men in SS Unions	87.6%	2.2%	7.4%	2.8%
Women in SS Unions	93.0%	1.3%	4.7%	0.9%
	Percent with Partner of Given Race			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Predicted (Own Means)				
Men in DS Unions	96.4%	0.3%	2.2%	1.1%
Women in DS Unions	97.0%	0.8%	1.9%	0.4%
Men in SS Unions	89.9%	2.0%	6.1%	2.0%
Women in SS Unions	94.9%	1.0%	3.4%	0.6%
	Percent with Partner of Given Race			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Predicted (Means for DS White Men)				
Men in DS Unions	96.4%	0.3%	2.2%	1.1%
Women in DS Unions	97.2%	0.7%	1.8%	0.3%
Men in SS Unions	92.6%	1.6%	4.4%	1.4%
Women in SS Unions	96.1%	0.8%	2.6%	0.5%
	Percent with Partner of Given Race			
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Predicted (Means for DS White Men and Equal Numbers of Race/Ethnic Groups in PUMAs)				
Different-Sex Male	87.3%	1.0%	6.8%	4.9%
Different-Sex Female	89.9%	2.6%	5.6%	1.9%
Same-Sex Male	82.1%	3.2%	9.7%	4.9%
Same-Sex Female	94.2%	1.4%	2.6%	1.8%