

**Racial-Ethnic Exclusion among Gay, Lesbian and Heterosexual  
White Online Daters**

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## **Abstract**

Employing 2,387 U.S. white gay, lesbian, and heterosexual internet dating profiles, this study examines patterns of racial-ethnic exclusion. Our study shows that racial-ethnic exclusion is not only gendered, as previous research suggests, but is also influenced by sexual orientation. Lesbians' and heterosexual men's racial-ethnic hierarchy of exclusion is the same. In contrast, gay men's racial-ethnic hierarchy of exclusion is not the same as that of any other group. With the exception of heterosexual Asian women, Asians are highly excluded by white daters. Middle Easterners are highly excluded by heterosexuals and lesbians, but far less excluded by gay men. Latinos are the least excluded ethnic group among white daters, but heterosexual women are far more likely to exclude them than are the other groups. All groups are highly exclusionary of Blacks. However, as compared to heterosexual men, lesbians are significantly more likely to exclude Blacks, while heterosexual women and gay men are significantly more likely to prefer them. This suggests that existing theories of race relations need to be expanded to account for not only gender, but sexual orientation to better understand patterns of racial acceptance.

In considering the impact of demographic changes on race relations, scholars have begun to reassess assumptions about racial and ethnic boundaries and group position, previously viewed as binary with whites on top and nonwhites as a whole on the bottom (Bobo 1999, Bonilla-Silva 2004a, Gans 1999, Gold 2004, Lee & Bean 2003, Yancey 2003, Zubrinsky & Bobo 1996) They suggest the emergence of a more complicated system of racial stratification inclusive of other ethnic groups including Latinos, Asian Americans, Middle Easterners, and Asian Indians (Bonilla-Silva 2004a). The position of racial groups relative to one another is an indicator of the degree of racial inclusion or exclusion in the dominant white society (Bobo 1999). The color line is maintained through a sense of group position that is relational (Omi & Winant 1994) and reflected by the exclusion and inclusion of racial groups not only in the economic and structural realm, but in the domain of “intimacy and privacy” (Blumer 1965:323).

This study focuses on stated racial preferences for dates (including blacks, Latinos, Asians, Asian Indians, Middle Easterners, and Native Americans) among white gay male, lesbian, and heterosexual internet daters as an indicator of racial hierarchy and incorporation. Although recent sociological scholarship has examined when and how intersections of social statuses, such as race, gender, and sexuality function simultaneously to inform social processes, few scholars examine all three dimensions and often exclude sexual orientation. This has been especially true of analyses that consider intimate partners. The marriage literature, mainly because few states allow same-sex marriage, often ignores lesbians and gay men. Recent research on lesbians and gay men indicate that intersections of sexuality, race, and gender may be important dimensions of sexual or romantic partner selection (Logan 2010, McIntosh et al. 2011, Moore 2011).

Recent scholarship on dating preferences has proven fruitful in examining how intersections of multiple social statuses are important to social processes such as romantic partner selection. Using a large dataset of heterosexual daters from Yahoo Personals, Feliciano et al. (2009) argue that the exclusion of various ethno-racial groups by whites differs by gender, suggesting that “exclusion relates to racialized images of masculinity and femininity, and shapes dating and marriage outcomes, and thus minority groups’ possibilities for full social incorporation” (p. 39). Only one study to date includes comparative analyses of the racial dating preferences of gays, lesbians, and heterosexuals. In their 2006 sample of online daters, McIntosh et. al. (2011) find that gays and lesbians are more willing to interracially date than heterosexuals are, and that lesbians are more open to outdating than gay men. While their study provides important results regarding sexual orientation and the propensity to interracially date, the daters were lumped together by sexual orientation. Thus, the results are clouded by that fact that white daters’ preferences were not separated from those of African Americans, Asians, Latinos, Native Americans, East Indians, Middle Easterners, Pacific Islanders, biracials, or multiracials. This is an important omission because recent research has found that as compared to African Americans, Latinos, and Asians, whites are the least likely to be open to interracial dating (Robnett & Feliciano 2011).

We examine the possibility that gender and sexuality structure racial preferences for white lesbians, heterosexuals and gay men. Lesbian and gays, as a population, have largely been studied to advance sociological theories of gender and sexuality, but neglected in the literature on interracial dating and interracial long-term relationships. Our approach builds on understandings of interracial relations in several ways. Drawing on theories of race and assimilation, sexual strategy, sexuality, and social psychology, we use quantitative analysis of

stated racial preferences from online dating profiles to examine whether and how sexuality and gender structures the racial preferences of white internet daters.

We argue that the degree to which the dominant group is willing to accept members of other ethnic and racial groups as intimate partners is an important indicator of the degree to which whites will allow boundaries between them and other groups to be weakened. Thus, acceptance by the dominant group of other groups as possible dates is an indicator of the latter's current standing in the racial hierarchy, as well as of the possibility for assimilation and racial boundary change in the future. In particular, we focus on gender and sexual orientation differences in racial preferences for dates.

While intermarriage remains an important marker of the strength of racial boundaries, dating relationships are increasingly important. A recent study of heterosexual, gay and lesbian couples shows that the internet is the third most likely way that heterosexual couples meet and it is the predominant way that same-sex couples meet (Rosenfeld & Thomas 2012). Individuals now spend less time in marital relationships than in the past; men and women are marrying later in life and an increasing proportion of adults spend more of their lives single (Schoen & Standish 2001). While not everyone will marry in their lifetimes, nearly all will enter into dating relationships, which makes dating an important arena in which race relations are played out. The degree to which the dominant group is willing to accept members of other racial groups as dating partners is an important indicator of the degree to which whites will allow racial boundaries to be weakened. Thus, acceptance by the dominant group of other groups as possible dates is an indicator of the latter's current standing in the racial hierarchy, as well as of the possibility for assimilation and racial boundary change in the future.<sup>1</sup> We focus on sexual orientation

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<sup>1</sup> We note that our view of assimilation is *not* a normative one; that is, we are not arguing that assimilation is necessarily something that *should* happen. Instead, we use the term assimilation, analytically, to describe the process

differences in the willingness of the dominant group, whites, to date outside of one's racial group, and we examine the extent to which such willingness is the product of not only a gendered racialized hierarchy, in which men and women of specific racial groups are differentially accepted by whites as dating partners, but also of sexual orientation. We ask: 1) to what extent does sexual orientation determine the racial-ethnic dating preferences of white online daters?; 2) in what ways will the dating preferences of white gay and lesbian daters mirror those of white heterosexual men and women? and, 3) does sexual orientation similarly influence lesbians' and gays' racial-ethnic dating preferences?

### **Sexual Strategies Theory, Social Exchange Theory and Theories of Assimilation**

Previous research shows that across racial-ethnic groups men are far more open to interracial marriage (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan 1995, Yancey 2002) and dating than are their female counterparts (Feliciano et al. 2009, Robnett & Feliciano 2011, Sakai & Johnson 1997, Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan 1995, Yancey & Lewis 2008). Studies show women favor long-term commitment (Buss & Schmitt 1993), are more concerned about the social status of a mate, and are choosier about several mate characteristics, even for short-term relationships (Buss 2003). These gender differences, they argue, are consistent with different sexual strategies stemming from evolution. Women, as primary caretakers of offspring, seek stability, while males are more likely to seek beauty in a mate and to propagate the species broadly. Women also place more emphasis on selecting a same-race partner than men (Fisman et al. 2006). A study of white college students finds that white females reported more disapproval from family and friends than did white males that dated nonwhites (Miller et al. 2004). Ultimately, women may place a greater

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through which European immigrant groups became integrated into U.S. society historically. At issue is whether a similar process is occurring among Latinos, blacks, and Asians; we argue that this process cannot occur if whites are not willing to enter into close interpersonal relationships with members of these groups.

emphasis on family, societal disapproval, and “cultural expectations within their own race”, than do men (Yancey and Lewis 2008:52). All of this research, however, has focused exclusively on heterosexual relationships. We do not know whether or not the same mechanisms apply to gay or lesbian daters. One study that tests the applicability of heterosexually derived sexual selection theory to gay and lesbian online and print ad daters, finds lesbians and gay men most similar to heterosexual men who prefer younger partners that are physically attractive. Like heterosexual men, a date’s resources are less important to gay men and lesbians than they are to heterosexual women. The differences, the author suggests, are due to lesbian’s, gay men’s and heterosexual men’s weaker investment in offspring than that of heterosexual women (Russock 2011). Thus, drawing on previous research, we predict that:

*Hypothesis 1a: Heterosexual women will be choosier, that is, have more criteria for dates and be more likely to state a racial preference than heterosexual men, gay men and lesbians..*

Given that racial attitudes are most restrictive regarding intimate relationships, it has long been held that intermarriage between whites and racial/ethnic minorities serves as an indicator of increasing integration, of the breakdown of barriers, and of lower social distance (Bogardus 1968, Gordon 1964, Park 1924, Schuman et al. 1997). Marital assimilation is an important step in the process of full societal inclusion (Gordon 1964). History shows that, over time, Italian, Irish, Polish and other northern and western European immigrants intermarried with, and ultimately came to be seen as white (Alba 1999, Brodtkin 1998., Foner 2000, Gerstle 1999, Ignatiev 1995. , Jacobson 1999, Perlmann 1998, Roediger 1991). But, what happens when marriage is not a possibility, as was the case among our Chicago, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and New

York daters?<sup>2</sup> How will the propensity of gays and lesbians to outdate compare to those of heterosexuals? One possibility is that gays and lesbians will be more open to interracial dating (McIntosh et. al. 2011). A study shows that the cohabitation of African Americans and whites “is more than twice as likely as marriage with whites”(Qian & Lichter 2007:86). Similarly, research shows that adolescents are more open to interracial dating, but as they grow older become more selective with regard to race (Joyner & Kao 2005). Likewise, One study of interracial dating suggests a weaker race filter regarding dating than marriage (Yancey 2002). Of course gays and lesbians engage in commitment ceremonies, and enjoy enduring relationships that may not mirror those of co-habitators or daters. Their greater openness towards interracial dating may also be driven by the perception of shared discrimination, and the ongoing struggle of minorities and the LGBT communities to gain civil rights (Han 2007). All of these reasons, including their exclusion from legal marital status may drive their greater openness towards interracial relationships. :

*Hypothesis 1b: Lesbians and gays will be more open to interracial dating than heterosexuals.*

However, there is some evidence to the contrary. Phua’s and Kaufman’s (2003) 1999 study of online gay and heterosexual male online daters finds that white gay men are significantly more likely to be choosier, that is have more preferences overall, and to state a racial preference for a date than are white heterosexual men. Research shows that gay and lesbian interracial couples exercise greater constraint regarding public displays of affection than

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<sup>2</sup> While California briefly allowed gays and lesbians to marry in 2008, at the time we collected our data in 2011, they were allowed to do so, although the state provides “marital benefits” to them. The exception is New York, which passed legislation on June 15, 2011 that allowed gays and lesbians to marry legally. Our collection of online dater postings concluded that month. In a future iteration of this paper, we will have conducted comparative analyses of the NY postings of gays and lesbians prior to June 15, 2011 and those posted in the aftermath, to determine whether or not there are any differences in racial-ethnic exclusion patterns. For now, we speculate that passage of the law may not have impacted such choices.



do interracial heterosexual couples (Steinbugler 2005). Gay and lesbian interracial couples fear that their visibility will result in negative public reactions. Moreover, black lesbians, who previously had been in relationships with whites, report more frequent experiences of discrimination than did same-race couples. They are also more likely to seek out a black partner in the next relationship (Mays et al. 1993). Gays and lesbians may wish to be less visible and not to draw attention to themselves for fear of violent reprisals or negative experiences. The effects of prejudice are a central concern among adult lesbian daters (Rose & Zand 2002). Based on Han's (2007) ethnographic study of minority gay men, it is clear that they suffer from racism and discrimination within predominantly white gay organizations, places of business, and the dating market. One of Han's (2007:56) Asian interviewees indicates that "Gay Asians are invisible to the gay white community" and a Native American respondent comments, "if you don't have blond hair and blue eyes, you don't meet the standard". The degree to which dominant cultural ideals of attractiveness and stereotypes of minorities dominant gays and lesbians preferences to a greater extent than they dominate those of heterosexual daters is unclear. Nonetheless, societal biases may combine with fears of increased discrimination. Collectively, these studies' findings might reasonably lead us to propose:

*Hypothesis 1c: Lesbians and gays will be less open to interracial dating than heterosexuals.*

Social exchange theories and theories of assimilation suggest differences in the degree of acceptance or exclusion different racial-ethnic groups may face in dating markets. According to the social exchange perspective and assimilation theories, those minority groups that enjoy greater secondary structural integration, as measured by income, educational attainment and residential integration, should enjoy greater primary structural incorporation or close, personal

ties with out-group members (Aguirre et al. 1989). The education and income levels of Asians and Middle Easterners exceed that of the U.S. population (Census 2004d, Census 2004a). In comparison to these groups, the education and income levels of blacks and Latinos are similarly low (Census 2004b, 2004c), with blacks having the lowest rates of residential integration with whites, followed by Latinos (Iceland et al. 2002). Based on the secondary structural inclusion of Middle Easterners and Asians, social exchange theory would predict that whites prefer dating those groups over Latinos, and to least prefer dating blacks. Additionally, social exchange theorists posit that men exchange financial security for an attractive woman (Stewart et al. 2000).

Feliciano et. al. (2009), however, find a gendered-racial hierarchy of inclusion and exclusion among white heterosexual internet daters. Although men and women most prefer to interracially date Latina/os, their patterns of exclusion are dissimilar. As compared to white men, white women are the most likely to exclude Middle Easterners followed by Asians. They are less likely to exclude Blacks than are white men, who exclude them the most, followed by Middle Easterners and Asians. What we do not know is the extent to which the patterns of racial-ethnic exclusion by white lesbian and gay daters will align with those of heterosexual daters. Previous research shows that similar to white heterosexual men, white gays are more exclusionary of blacks than of Asians and Latinos (Phua & Kaufman 2003). Thus, we might predict that:

*Hypothesis 2a: Gay men's patterns of racial exclusion will resemble those of white heterosexual men such that Blacks are the most excluded followed by Middle Easterners and Asians; and, the most included group will be Latinos.*

Conversely, there is some evidence to suggest that gay men's constructions of masculinity may be largely driven by hegemonic norms of masculinity (Connell 1992); and, that they have constructed dual masculinities such that "masculine" is preferred over "feminine"(Clarkson

2006, Connell 1992, Pascoe 2007). An examination of the content of online ads posted by gay men shows that preferences for blacks, Asians, and Latinos are highly stereotyped: “Asians as exotic, docile, loyal partners; Hispanics as passionate, fiery lovers; and Blacks as ‘well-endowed,’ forbidden partners” (Phua & Kaufman 2003). Historically, Western constructions of Asian men have rendered them as feminine. Much like the stereotype of heterosexual Asian women, Asian gay men are “portrayed as exotic but ultimately pliant sexual creature[s] whose sexuality is directed outward toward the [gay white male]” (Hagland 1998 as quoted in Han 2006:15) (Espiritu 1997, Hagland 1998, Han 2006, Prasso 2005). Trevon Logan’s (2010) study of online gay male sex workers finds that Asians are the only group that does not command a greater price to be on top. Blacks and whites command the greatest fee, but only blacks receive a huge wage penalty if they advertise as being on the bottom. A qualitative study consisting of focus groups and in-depth interviews with Los Angeles users of online internet sexual hook-up sites, further delineates the racial sexual hierarchy that places white men as the most desirable, followed by Latinos, blacks and Asians, respectively (Paul et al. 2010, Poon & Ho 2008). The results showed that Asian/Pacific Islanders are most often explicitly excluded in ads. Blacks, while often excluded, usually experienced the rejection after initial contact. In contrast to blacks, Asian men expressed the feeling that they were “not even on the hierarchy at all” or that they were often solicited only by older white men (Paul et. al. 2009:534). Latinos were desirable, but exoticized, while blacks were sexually objectified such that little correspondence takes place. Rather, the solicitations are graphic, and the interactions take on a “fantasy” impersonal quality where black men are not even looked at or touched (Paul et. al. 2009:534). Ads for black males solicit a slave/master relationship with the “dominant black male and the shackled white male” (Ward 2008). Ward’s (2008) study of Los Angeles white men’s Craigslist ads for black men on

the down low shows that race places a central role in the types and quality of ads. She states, “Friendship, equity, and ‘normal and natural male bonding’ [characteristic in ads for whites] are represented as either undesirable or impossible across racial lines (427)”. Collectively, the research shows that gay men value hyper-masculinity or those men who are muscular and athletic (Han 2006, Lanzieri & Hildebrandt 2011, Varangis et al. 2012). Since Asian men are stereotyped as feminine and Black men as hyper-masculine, it is reasonable to expect that Asian men will be more excluded than are Black men by gay men. If white men are buying into dominate messages about minority men, their patterns of exclusion may resemble those of heterosexual white women. We posit that:

*Hypothesis 2b: Gay men’s patterns of racial exclusion will resemble those of white heterosexual women such that Middle Easterners and Asians will be the most excluded followed by blacks; and Latinos will be the most included.*

There are no studies that examine lesbian racial-ethnic preferences. Although a few studies examine lesbian discourses (Thorne & Coupland 1998); deployment of identities (i.e. butch, femme, tomboy) (Farr 2011, Smith & Stillman 2002); or characteristics offered or sought by them as compared to gays and heterosexuals (Gonzales & Meyers 1993, Russock 2011), we have no basis upon which to make our predictions about racial-ethnic preferences. That gay males appear to buy into hetero-normative stereotypes of men, may suggest that lesbians do too. This is purely speculative, but if so, they might be influenced by dominant stereotypes of women. Black women are often portrayed as the mammy, the whore/jezebel, or the bitch (Craig 2002, Entman & Rojecki 2000, hooks 1992, Jewell 1993). They are stereotyped as sexually

deviant or vulgar (Collins 2000), and in opposition to more feminine whites, Asians or Latinas (Hunt 2005 ). Asian women are portrayed as hyper-feminine, passive (Koshy 2004, Moran 2001), and exotic (Espiritu 1997, Praso 2005). Latinas are cast as “hot-blooded, tempestuous, and hypersexual” with a recent emphasis on their curvaceous bodies and big butts (Mendible 2007). The extent to which these dominant hetero-normative images will be reflected in the patterns of white lesbian’s inclusion or exclusion of these groups is unclear.

Therefore, we can only speculate that:

*Hypothesis 3a: Lesbians’ patterns of racial exclusion will resemble those of white heterosexual men such that Blacks are the most excluded followed by Middle Easterners and Asians; and, the most included group will be Latinas.*

*Hypothesis 3b: Lesbians’ patterns of racial exclusion will resemble those of white heterosexual women such that Middle Easterners and Asians will be the most excluded followed by blacks; and Latinos will be the most included.*

## **Method**

### *Quantitative Data from Internet Dating Profiles*

Existing studies that use internet site data argue that internet dating is a unique and beneficial means through which to explore date selection, as date preferences are often explicitly stated on users’ profiles and opportunities are not as limited by physical proximity or encounters (Feliciano et al. 2009, Kalmijn 1998). Moreover, internet dating sites have become increasingly popular with the internet as the third most likely way that heterosexual couples meet and the predominant way that same-sex couples meet (Rosenfeld & Thomas 2012).

For this study we collected data from internet dating profiles posted on Match.com, one of the leading internet dating websites with over 1.6 million active subscribers (“IAC Reports Q1,” 2011). In recent years, Match.com acquired other dating websites that were previously

among the biggest competitors in the online dating market, notably Yahoo Personals and OkCupid. Further, Match.com, unlike other competitors such as eHarmony, has historically allowed gays and lesbians to participate on its website and seek members of the same sex for potential partners, making it an ideal platform to analyze data on same-sex dating preferences..

We collected data from internet dating profiles posted on Match.com between April 2011 and June 2011, selecting random, stratified samples of profiles from people who self-identified as black, white, Latino, or Asian living within 50 miles of Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Atlanta. These metropolitan areas allow for regional diversity (West, Northeast, Midwest and South), and include cities thought to be the most diverse and tolerant (Los Angeles and New York), as well as cities that are considered more conservative (Atlanta). We randomly selected 200 profiles for each race/gender/sexuality combination for a targeted sample size of 12,800. To extract our sample, we first used the search criteria on the website to display all the profiles for each gender and race combination in the age range within 50 miles of each city. Then, to get as representative a sample as possible *within* each race/gender/sexual orientation combination in each city, we sorted profiles by how recently they were posted or edited; we selected the first 200 profiles that appeared within each race/gender/sexual orientation/city. We wanted to eliminate any potential bias that might have resulted from selecting directly from the default order in which the profiles appeared on the site (it was unknown how the order was determined) or by sorting by other possible criteria, such as age or distance from the city center. This study parcels out the profiles of white gay, lesbian, heterosexual female and heterosexual male daters for a combined sample size of 2,387.<sup>3</sup>

We coded all demographic information about the person posted in the profile (age, sex, race, education, etc.), and information about the characteristics they seek in a date (age, race, education, body type, etc.). Daters are asked to state a preference for a number of characteristics they look for in a date, including ethnicity. They can select one or more of a number of ethnicities, which include Asian, Black/African descent, East Indian, Latino/Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Native American, Pacific Islander, White/Caucasian, and Other. This data allows us to examine whether daters change the default “any” option more often for ethnicity than they do for

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<sup>3</sup> We aimed for a targeted sample size of 3,200 whites in order to allow for robust statistical tests of differences across four strata: gender, race, sexual orientation, and metropolitan area. This enabled us to have a large enough sample of smaller subgroups of interest to draw inferences. The sample size is smaller than our targeted sample size because there were fewer lesbians (664), some profiles were of mixed raced daters, and some profiles were duplicates.

their characteristics. We can examine which racial-ethnic groups express willingness to date other racial-ethnic groups, and which groups are excluded.

As other studies of Internet dating have noted, using data collected from the Internet has a number of limitations. First, people who date on the Internet are not a random sample of people who date both offline and online. Second, access to the internet and the ability to express oneself in English through writing are also necessary to use Match.com, thereby possibly skewing the users of internet dating services towards the older and more educated. As discussed in Feliciano et al. (2009), these issues pose major limitations, however it should not bias our results in terms of racial preferences, particularly since people may be more open to interracial dating online since the website is multi-ethnic, and more educated responders have demonstrated more positive racial attitudes (Bobo & Massagli 2001). Moreover, there is no reason to expect that the bias would be more problematic among gays and lesbians. Additionally, internet dating has become by most accounts a more mainstream activity, and recent survey research contends that internet daters are not largely different across socio-economic or demographic characteristics (including gender, race or education) from single internet users who do not use internet dating services (Sautter et al. 2010).

To assess racial preferences and exclusion, we examined several dichotomous outcomes. Since daters selected among ten different racial/ethnic groups as possible dates, our sample includes numerous possible responses to the question of which racial groups were preferred. To simplify the analyses, we focused on dichotomous outcomes: whether the dater stated a racial preference at all, whether he/she preferred to date only others of the same race, and whether the dater excluded as possible dates persons of his/her own race, whites, blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Middle Easterners.

We controlled for several demographic factors and personal characteristics that could potentially be confounded with race or gender and racial preferences (see Table 1). Although by design the sample is nearly evenly divided between Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Atlanta, we controlled for metropolitan area. We also controlled for age, which ranged from an average of approximately 33 years old (Lesbians) to 37 years old (Gay men). We controlled for educational attainment, and personal characteristics, including body type, height, political views and religion, that may be related to racial preferences and also vary by race, gender and sexual orientation.

We also considered preferences for characteristics other than race, including religion, education, body type and height. Women are more likely than men to state preferences for all characteristics except body type. Finally, we include two important control variables to capture how choosy the daters are. The first measure is the percentage of 15 possible characteristics, other than race, that daters can express a preference for, such as age, height or education. Heterosexual women (50%) tended to state preferences for many more characteristics than heterosexual males (41%), lesbians (44%) or gay men (45%).<sup>4</sup> Daters can express preferences for up to 9 different racial groups. Since one goal in the paper is to examine the exclusion of *particular* racial groups, we disentangle that specific exclusion from a general openness to dating multiple racial groups by using the number of preferred groups as an indicator of this general tendency.<sup>5</sup> Our analyses proceeded by examining descriptive patterns of racial, gender, and sexual orientation differences in racial preferences and exclusion. We then estimated logistic regression models with controls for demographic and physical characteristics, racial composition of daters' municipalities of residence, choosiness and preferences for other characteristics. These models allowed us to obtain

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<sup>4</sup>That women are choosier may reflect gendered dating dynamics. Since women are more likely than men to be approached on the internet Hitsch, Gunter J. , Ali Hortascsu, and Dan Ariely. 2006. "What Makes You Click? Mate Preferences and Matching Outcomes in Online Dating." in *Sloan Research Paper No. 4603-06*. MIT., stating their preferences may be more important, while men may have less incentive to change the default option, "any" for preferences.

<sup>5</sup> Because this variable would be endogenous if included in analyses of the exclusion of any particular racial group, we include modified versions of this variable that leave out the particular racial group of interest for each model in the multivariate analyses (descriptive statistics available upon request).



predicted probabilities not confounded by other factors, thus showing unique differences by race, gender, and sexual orientation in racial preferences and exclusion.

## **The Findings**

### ***Choosiness***

We examine our descriptive statistics in Table 1 that show the percentages of which group is choosiest (having more preferences) overall, and most likely to state a racial preference. With regard to overall choosiness, Hypothesis 1a, that heterosexual women would be choosier than heterosexual men, lesbians and gay men is confirmed. Heterosexual women are the choosiest with 49.9% stating a preference (except for race/ethnicity) as compared to 44.5% of gay men, 43.7% of lesbians, and 41.3% of heterosexual men.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

### ***Openness to Interracial Dating***

Figure 1 shows that Hypotheses 1b, *Lesbians and gays will be more open to interracial dating than heterosexuals*, and 1c, *Lesbians and gays will be less open to interracial dating than heterosexuals*, are partially confirmed. Less than half of the heterosexual men (43.7%) and lesbians (43.9%) in our study state a racial preference instead of leaving the default on “Any/No Preference”. Thus, lesbians and heterosexual men are the most likely to leave the default on “any”. 58.7% of heterosexual women, however, and 51.5% of gay men state a racial preference. Heterosexual women, then, are the choosiest with regard to stated racial preferences. Lesbians are not more likely to be choosier than heterosexual men regarding racial preferences. Rather, those wishing to date men are the choosiest and have the most racial preferences. Thus, gender alone does not appear to be driving overall choosiness or the propensity to state a racial

preference. Rather, sexual orientation and gender combine to determine the dater's degree of selectivity.

56.1% of Lesbians as compared to 41.3% of heterosexual women leave the default on "any", meaning a willingness to date anyone or to have no racial-ethnic preferences. In contrast, 48.5% of gay men as compared to 56.1% of heterosexual men have no racial-ethnic preferences. These findings, however, do not tell us which groups are most open to interracial dating. That daters state a racial preference does not imply a lack of openness to interracial dating, only a lack of openness towards dating all racial-ethnic groups.

We see in Figure 1 that heterosexual men (16.3%) and gay men (17.7%) are the least likely to want to only date whites. That is, they are the most open to interracial dating. Lesbians and gays are more open to interracial dating than are heterosexual women, but they are not more open than heterosexual men. Heterosexual women are by far the least open to interracial dating with 32.6% only wanting to date whites. Lesbians are also more likely to want to only date whites (21.1%) than are men, but they are more open to interracial dating than heterosexual women. Thus, the findings support sexual strategies theory and previous research that shows heterosexual women are less open to interracial dating than heterosexual men. However, not only gender matters but also sexual-orientation in determining openness to interracial dating. Lesbians are less open to interracial dating than either gay men or heterosexual men. This finding does not entirely support previous research that shows lesbian dating preference patterns to be most similar to heterosexual men with regard to age, resource, physical attraction, and commitment priorities (Russock 2011). Lesbians' and gay men's desire to only date whites falls in-between the preferences of heterosexual women and heterosexual women. These findings suggest that,

overall, minority women, regardless of sexual orientation, and gay minority men have greater opportunities to interracially date whites than do heterosexual minority men.

Interestingly, although heterosexual women are the most likely to only want to date whites, they are also the most likely to exclude whites as possible dates. Heterosexual men (3.4%), gay men (6.7%) and lesbians (1.6%) are much less likely than are heterosexual women (10.9%) to exclude whites as dates. Previous work shows that body type (a few extra pounds) has a significant positive effect on heterosexual women's openness to dating blacks and Latinos (Glasser et al. 2009). Glasser et al. (2009) found that Latinos and black men are far more open to dating plus sized women than are white men and Asian men. We speculate that body type may be driving some heterosexual women in our study to only date non-whites. We now turn to an examination of those with racial-ethnic preferences to compare the racial exclusion patterns of gays, lesbians, and heterosexuals.

### ***Patterns of Racial Exclusion in Dating Preferences***

Hypotheses 2a, *Gay men's patterns of racial exclusion will resemble those of white heterosexual men such that Blacks are the most excluded followed by Middle Easterners and Asians; and, the most included group will be Latinos;* and, 2b, *Gay men's patterns of racial exclusion will resemble those of white heterosexual women such that Middle Easterners and Asians will be the most excluded followed by blacks; and Latinos will be the most included,* are not confirmed. Gay men do not have the same racial-ethnic exclusion patterns as those of heterosexual men or heterosexual women. Gay men's pattern of racial exclusion is not the same as that of any of the other groups (See Figure 2), although they most exclude blacks and most include Latinos. Similar to heterosexual men, blacks are their most excluded group, but gay men

are less likely than heterosexual men to exclude them (83.2%GM v 92.5%HM). Gays and heterosexual men are most inclusive of Latinos, with exclusion rates of 43.2% and 53.8% respectively, but here too, gay men are less likely to exclude them. Gay men are far more inclusive of Middle Easterners than are any of the other daters, with 66.2% excluding them as compared to 81.6% of heterosexual men, 93.3% of heterosexual women, and 86.4% of lesbians. On the other hand, heterosexual men are far less likely to exclude Asians (56.9%) as compared to 81.5% of gay men. As compared to gay men, heterosexual women are much more likely to exclude Middle Easterners (93.3% v 66.2%); Latinos (76.3% v 42.3%); and Asians (91.1% v 81.5%), although their exclusion rates of blacks are similar (80%HW v 83.2% GM). However, like heterosexual women, Asian men are the second most excluded group and Latinos are the least excluded group.

Still, gay men are nearly equally likely to exclude Asian (81.5%) and African-American men (83.2%) as possible dates. Previous research would have predicted that gay men would be more open to dating Black men than Asian men because studies show they embrace hetero-normative ideals of masculinity. Logan's study of male sex workers showed black men's advantage as tops and the stereotyped view that Asians should be bottoms. We see, however, that these views do not transfer to the arena of dating. Rather both groups are similarly highly excluded by gay men. Earlier, we discussed studies showing that Asian men are highly excluded among gay daters. These studies find that gay men buy into hetero-normative conceptions of masculinity. Western constructions of Asian men that stereotype them as feminine, compliant, and less masculine than white men, may be driving their exclusion. However, gay men's exclusion of Asians mirrors that of lesbians. They appear to reject them less than do heterosexual women, but more than heterosexual men. Thus, sexual orientation appears to subdue the

extremes of heterosexual women where 91% of them exclude Asian men as possible dates, and heterosexual men, where 57% of them exclude Asian women.

As compared to the other three groups, gay men are far more inclusive of Middle Easterners. 66% of gay men exclude them as compared to 93% of heterosexual women, 82% of heterosexual men and 86% of lesbians. This suggests that with regard to the domain of intimacy gay Middle Easterners are far less excluded than heterosexuals and lesbians. This was a surprising finding. One possible reason for these contrasting rates of acceptance might be that in addition to Middle Easterners racial classification as whites, those that identify as gay have already challenged dominant stereotypical conceptions of them as terrorists, traditional, and oppressors of women. The adherence of gay men to masculine hetero-norms may also explain their relatively greater acceptance of Middle Eastern men. Perhaps, they and Latinos more closely fit the masculine ideal. Again, we can only speculate about what is driving this outcome.

In comparing the racial-ethnic exclusion patterns of white gay, lesbian, and heterosexual online daters, it is striking that lesbian's patterns are most similar to those of heterosexual men (See Figure 2), thus confirming *Hypothesis 3a* that *Lesbians' patterns of racial exclusion will resemble those of white heterosexual men such that Blacks are the most excluded followed by Middle Easterners and Asians; and, the most included group will be Latinas*. Therefore, our proposition 3b, that *Lesbians' patterns of racial exclusion will resemble those of white heterosexual women* is not confirmed.

Heterosexual men (92.5%) and lesbians (92.2%) are most likely to exclude black women followed by Middle Eastern (81.6%HM v 86.4%L), Asian (56.9%HM v 80.6%L), and Latino (53.4%HM v 56.6%L) women. Thus, their hierarchies of exclusion are identical. One reason

that these patterns may be similar is that lesbians, as do gay men, buy into hetero-normative constructions of who is attractive and who is not, or accept prevailing stereotypes of blacks, Middle Easterners, Asians and Latinos in similar ways. Although the patterns of exclusion are the same, there is significant variation with respect to the exclusion of Asian women.

Heterosexual men are far more inclusive of them than are lesbians. This suggests that the stereotypical constructions of Asian women as docile and ultra-feminine (and *assuming* this is influencing the preferences) may not be as appealing to lesbians as they are to heterosexual men. Our data cannot tell us the extent to which such stereotypes are driving our outcomes. Clearly, further research is needed to better understand why lesbians and hetero-sexual men similarly exclude these groups of women but vary in the degree of exclusion of Asian women.

Although, the racial-ethnic hierarchy of exclusion among the four groups was similar in some ways, they also varied. African Americans are highly excluded by gay men (83.2%), lesbians (92.2%), and heterosexual daters (92.5%HM v 80%HW). They are the most excluded racial-ethnic group by whites, although as compared to heterosexual men (92.5%), heterosexual women (80%) are the least exclusionary of them. In contrast, Latinos are the *least* excluded by all of the groups. This result extends the findings of Feliciano et. al. 2009, that show Latinos are far less excluded than other minority groups by white heterosexual online daters. Even so, Latinos are far more likely to be excluded by heterosexual women (76.3%), than by gay men (42.3%), lesbians (56.6%), and heterosexual men (53.8%).

[ INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE]

We also see that Asian males are highly excluded by heterosexual females (91.1%), gay men (81.5%), and lesbians (80.6%). As stated earlier Asian men are nearly as excluded by gay men (81.5%) as are black men (83.2%). Interestingly, Middle Eastern men are far more excluded by heterosexual women (93.3%) than they are by gay men (66.2%), while Middle Eastern women are highly and nearly equally excluded by lesbians (86.4%) and heterosexual men (81.6%).

Now we turn away from descriptive statistics to consider whether or not the patterns hold when we control for the white daters' age, education, body type, height, political views, region, and preferences for religion as well as for their preferences for a date including preferences for religion, education, body type, choosiness or their overall number of preferences, and the number of racial preferences. Because in the previous descriptive statistics we examined only those with a stated racial preference, we wanted to see whether or not the exclusion patterns would differ if we combined both those daters that left the racial-ethnic category as the default "No Preferences" and those that stated specific racial preferences. They do not (Tables are available upon request).

Given that over half of the respondents left the "any" category to indicate a willingness to date any racial-ethnic group, and to better control for the propensities of heterosexual women and gay men to be choosier, Table 2 shows the relative risk ratios from multinomial regressions.

[ INSERT TABLE 2 HERE ]

The relative risk ratios from our multinomial regression analyses support most of the conclusions drawn from the descriptive statistics. Lesbians appear similar to white men in their exclusion of blacks descriptively, but are actually more exclusionary when we control for

choosiness and other characteristics. The significance level is marginal, .1, with lesbians twice as likely to exclude black women as heterosexual men. Although the descriptive statistics show heterosexual women less likely to exclude blacks as possible dates than heterosexual men, with controls we see no significant differences between these two groups. However, the risk ratios show that heterosexual women (.42) are more likely to state a preference for black dates (as opposed to agreeing to date any racial-ethnic group) than are heterosexual men. This finding is consistent with other research that shows heterosexual white women significantly more inclusive of blacks than heterosexual white men (Feliciano et al. 2009, Robnett & Feliciano 2011). Similar to heterosexual women, gay men (.39) are significantly less likely than heterosexual men to have *no* racial-ethnic preference than they are to state a preference for blacks. Thus, while gay men and heterosexual women are more likely to state a racial preference, it is clear that across all groups, blacks are highly excluded by whites. These findings, in part, support social exchange and sexual strategies predictions as whites have little to gain and status to lose by dating blacks. Our findings reinforce assimilation theory's conceptualization of blacks as located at the bottom of the racial hierarchy (Bonilla-Silva 2004b, Lee & Bean 2007). That all groups so highly exclude black daters shows the degree to which race drives the exclusion of blacks in the dating market, and ultimately in the marriage market as well. However, gender and sexual orientation also matter in that heterosexual women and gay men are more likely than heterosexual men to state a preference for blacks.

As compared to heterosexual men, all of the groups are more likely to exclude Asians than they are to include them. Heterosexual women are nine times (9.0), gay men nearly five times (4.9), and lesbians over three times (3.7) as likely to exclude Asians (rather than to prefer them) as are non-gay men. These results confirm the findings of Feliciano et. al. (2009) that



show Asians are experiencing varied levels of incorporation based on gender. However, this gender effect is not present when gays and lesbians are compared (Analysis available upon request). Lesbians are as highly exclusive of Asian women as gay men are of Asian men. Moreover lesbians, gay men, and heterosexual women are less likely than heterosexual men to be open to dating an Asian than they are to prefer to date any racial-ethnic group. Thus, not only gender, but sexual orientation is driving the exclusion of Asians in the online dating arena.

The descriptive statistics showed that heterosexual women are far more likely to exclude Latinos than any other gender-sexual orientation combination. As our relative risk ratios illustrate, as compared to heterosexual men, heterosexual women are 2.8 times more likely to exclude Latinos than to prefer them as possible dates. Again, this confirms previous research showing that among heterosexual online daters, Latinos are more excluded (although slightly) than Latinas, suggesting gendered patterns of incorporation into the dominant white society (Feliciano et. al. 2009). However, there are no significant differences between gay men, lesbians and heterosexual men suggesting that gay and lesbian Latinos are as incorporated as heterosexual Latinas among white online daters. Additionally, the relative risk ratios show that gay men (.47) are significantly more likely to prefer to date Latinos, as compared to heterosexual men. While all of the groups are far more inclusive of Latinos than any other racial group, it is apparent that as compared to white daters' acceptance of Latinas and gay Latinos, heterosexual Latinos are at a significant disadvantage.

Although heterosexual and lesbian Middle Easterners are highly excluded by whites, gay men are significantly more inclusive of them. In general, women are far more likely than men to exclude, rather than to prefer, Middle Easterners as dates. Heterosexual women are 2.8 times more likely than heterosexual men to exclude Middle Easterners. And, lesbians are 1.9 times as

likely to exclude Middle Eastern women as are heterosexual men. Gay men (as compared to heterosexual men) are .5 times less likely to exclude Middle Easterners; and, significantly (.33) less likely to have no racial-ethnic preference than they are to prefer a Middle Easterner as a date. Thus, gay male Middle Easterners are significantly more included by whites than are other Middle Eastern groups of daters.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

It is clear that gender *and* sexual orientation effect white online daters' exclusion of racial-ethnic minority groups. Scholarship on racial-ethnic assimilation patterns has primarily paid attention to the ways in which particular racial-ethnic groups as a whole gain acceptance by the dominant white society. This research has often neglected other significant intersecting constructs that may influence different rates of inclusion of minority subgroups. In particular, whites' racial-ethnic exclusion of African Americans, Asians, Middle Easterners and Latinos varies significantly by the gender and sexual orientation of the white online dater.

We find heterosexual men (16.3%) and gay men (17.7%) are the least likely to want to only date whites. That is, they are the most open to interracial dating. This confirms previous findings showing heterosexual men more open to interracial dating than their female counterparts (e.g. Tucker and Mitchell-Kernan 1995). Our findings, however, are the first to show that gay men are also more open to interracial dating than heterosexual women and lesbians. Heterosexual women are by far the least open to interracial dating with 32.6% only wanting to date whites. Lesbians are also more likely to want to only date whites (21.1%) than are men.

We now turn to a discussion of racial-ethnic exclusion among daters with a stated racial preference. A most striking finding is that lesbians' hierarchy of racial-ethnic exclusion mirrors

that of heterosexual white men as they most exclude blacks, followed by Middle Easterners, and Asians; while they most prefer to date Latinas. Gay men's hierarchy of racial-ethnic exclusion does not mirror those of lesbians or heterosexual daters. However, similar to the other groups, they most exclude blacks and most include Latinos; but, they are far more inclusive of Middle Easterners than Asians. In fact, they are the least exclusionary of Middle Easterners than any of the gender-sexual orientation combinations. Gay men are also the only group significantly more likely to state a preference for Middle Easterners and Latinos, as compared to heterosexual men. Heterosexual women are most exclusionary of Middle Easterners, followed by Asians, blacks and Latinos.<sup>6</sup>

Similar to previous studies of white online daters, and consistent with social exchange theory and assimilation theories, our findings show African Americans to be highly excluded (Feliciano et. al. 2009). Overall, blacks are the most excluded group among our daters which confirms previous research that shows blacks remain at the greatest social distance from whites; and that racism is more entrenched toward this group than towards Latinos, Asians, and Middle Easterners (Bonilla-Silva 2004b, Feliciano 2001, Lee & Bean 2004, Yancey 2003). However, the overall findings mask important gender and sexual orientation differences in the acceptance of blacks. Sexual strategies theory predicts that heterosexual women will be far more exclusionary of minority daters than heterosexual men because of their greater investment in procreation, their offspring, and social status (Buss and Schmidt 1993). However, our findings show that *lesbians are the most exclusionary of blacks*, and that heterosexual men exclude blacks more than do heterosexual women. Thus, the theory cannot explain why lesbians and heterosexual men, who are expected to have less investment in procreation and their offspring, are more exclusionary of

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<sup>6</sup> The heterosexual patterns of racial-ethnic hierarchical exclusion are the same as those found by Feliciano et. al. 2009.

blacks than are heterosexual women (See Russock 2011). That black women are the object of lesbian and heterosexual male desire; and, that a version of exchange theory suggests physical attractiveness is the most valuable trait for women (Stewart et. al. 2003), leads us to speculate that lesbians and heterosexual men may not perceive black women as physically attractive. In the U.S. thin, slender and fit body types are a defining characteristic of which women are attractive and which women are not (Bordo 1993). Most striking is the implication that lesbians may be similarly influenced, as heterosexual men are, by dominant societal stereotypes of black women that portray them as behaviorally and physically at odds with white femininity (Collins 2004, Craig 2002, 2006). Historically rooted media images of black women as the mammy, such as in the recent film, *The Help*, as well as those depictions that perpetuate negative stereotypes of the whore/jezebel, and the “bitch”, continue to dominate popular culture (Craig 2006, Entman & Rojecki 2000, hooks 1992, Jewell 1993). Moreover, the construction of black women is not only in opposition to that of white women, but to Latinas and Asian women as well (Hunt 2005 ).

While the exclusion of black men by heterosexual women and gay men did not significantly differ from that of heterosexual men, they were significantly more likely to prefer to date them. This suggests a weakening of racial boundaries towards black men. To be certain, negative stereotypes of black men persist. They are often portrayed as criminals, for example, but the greater preference for them over black women may also be a product of stereotypes that portray both heterosexual (Collins 2004) and gay black men (Han 2007, Logan 2010) as hyper-masculine, athletic, muscular, and sexually virile. Collins (2004:153) argues that “in some cases, the physical strength, aggressiveness, and sexuality thought to reside in black men’s bodies generate admiration...” Studies show that gay men prefer muscular athletic men (Lanzieri & Hildebrandt 2011, Varangis et al. 2012). Thus, black men’s stereotype as athletic and fit provides

a basis for perceiving them as attractive. However, this does not imply that there are no negative consequences, as Han's (2007:57) study of gay men shows that black men are often perceived as "overly sexual predators racially capable of fulfilling white male sexual lust ... Rather than existing as individuals, black men exist as sexual tools, ready to fulfill, or violate, white male sexual fetishes." Thus, preferences for black male dates may reflect a weakening of racial boundaries, but also the fetishes of white daters.

Our study finds that Latinos are the most included by gay men, lesbians, and heterosexuals which supports the predictions of assimilation theories and the findings of other research (Feliciano et. al. 2009) showing Latinos gaining acceptance as "honorary whites" (Bonilla-Silva 2004a) and assimilating into the dominant white mainstream (Yancey 2003). Most striking, however, is that the acceptance of Latinos is not uniform. Heterosexual women are 2.8 times more likely to exclude Latinos than heterosexual men are to exclude Latinas. Gay men and lesbians rates of exclusion do not differ significantly from those of heterosexual men. Thus, heterosexual Latinos are less likely to be incorporated or assimilated into the white domain of intimacy than are Latinas, regardless of sexual orientation, and gay Latinos. In fact, gay men are significantly more likely to prefer to date Latinos than heterosexual men are to prefer to date Latinas.

Like the findings of Feliciano et. al. 2009, our result that female heterosexual daters are far more inclusive of Latinos than Asian men and Middle Eastern men does not support the predictions of either economic exchange theories or sexual strategies theories. As discussed at the outset, Latinos earn far less than do those two groups of men. It makes little sense those heterosexual women, who are purported to be concerned about resources to support their offspring, are more open to dating lower income earners. Only gay men show a significant

openness to dating Middle Eastern men, but they remained highly exclusionary of Asian men. Thus, the greater structural economic incorporation of Asian men and Middle Eastern men does not appear to influence the preferences of heterosexual women, although it may explain the relatively less exclusion of Middle Eastern men by gay men. Moreover, the fact that the U.S. census classifies Middle Easterners as white, does not seem to influence their greater acceptance by heterosexual women who exclude them (93.3%) at much higher rates than they exclude black men (80%). A factor that may influence the higher rates of exclusion by the other groups may be the pervasiveness of negative media portrayals of Middle Easterners, who are often conflated with Arabs. Several studies of these images (Dorsey 2002, Merskin 2004, Muscati 2002, Shaheen 2003, Steinberg 2002), suggest that Arabs are viewed as “evil, bloodthirsty, animalistic terrorists (Merskin 2004:157).” Shaheen’s (2003) study of 900 films in which Arabs and Muslims appear, show that most Arabs and Muslims are depicted as “heartless, brutal, uncivilized, religious fanatics (p. 171).” Why gays would not adhere to this perception is a puzzle. One reason might be that gay male Middle Easterners, by definition, cannot comply with the dominant imagery of them. White gay men may associate traditional images of Arab/Muslim masculinity as only applicable to heterosexual Middle Eastern men. Clearly, future research is needed to better explain gay men’s greater acceptance of Middle Eastern men as dates.

With the exception of heterosexual Asian women, Asians are highly excluded by gay men, heterosexual women and lesbians. These three groups of white online daters are also significantly less likely to prefer to date Asians than are heterosexual men. These findings strongly suggest that heterosexual Asian women are far more likely to assimilate into the white mainstream than are Asian lesbians and Asian men regardless of sexual orientation. Heterosexual Asian men are more highly excluded than are black men by heterosexual women;

and Asian gay men are nearly as excluded as black men. The literature concerning the exclusion and stereotyping of Asian men suggests that both gay Asian men and heterosexual Asian men are similarly viewed as feminine, weak, and submissive. As discussed earlier, gay Asian men are often invisible and characterized as not even a part of the racial-ethnic dating hierarchy. Images of Asian American men as asexual and lacking masculinity are pervasive (Chen 1999, Espiritu 1997, Fong 1998, Kim 1986) and appear to impact not only heterosexual women, but gay men as well. As Fong (1998) notes, “Despite a few notable exceptions, Asian men have most often been depicted as strangely asexual characters. Asian women, in contrast, have often been depicted as almost completely sexual (192).” Asian women are thought to embody an idealized femininity that is at once exotic and sexual as well as chaste and virginal (Berg 2002). They have been defined as “the embodiment of perfect womanhood and exotic femininity” (Espiritu 1997: 113). It has been argued that these stereotypical traits are desirable to white men, many of whom “are looking for a traditional wife and family relationship they nostalgically think existed during the 1950s...” (Schaeffer-Grabiel 2004). Although lesbians’ hierarchy of racial-ethnic exclusion mirrored that of heterosexual men, such that Asians are the second least excluded group, they are far less inclusive of Asian women. While 56.9% of white men exclude Asian women, 80.6% of lesbians do so. It is unclear why this discrepancy exists. One reason might be that the majority of lesbians’ personal ads do not request feminine or butch women (Smith & Stillman 2002), but are more likely to emphasize personality attributes (Child et al. 1996). Thus, lesbians may be less influenced by the “feminine” characterization of Asian women. This, however, does not explain their high rates of exclusion by lesbian daters. Moreover, research shows that when lesbians specify a preference in their personal ads, they most prefer feminine women to masculine women (Farr 2011, Smith & Stillman 2002). Given that Asian women are depicted and stereotyped as

ultra-feminine, we are at a loss as to how to explain the high rates of their exclusion by lesbian daters.

What is abundantly clear is that whites' online dating choices are not only influenced by constructions of race-ethnicity, but also by gender and sexual orientation. The relatively greater rejection or acceptance of subgroups within specific racial-ethnic groups suggests an uneven assimilation trajectory for African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and Middle Easterners into the white mainstream. Regardless of the degree of structural and economic incorporation, Latinas, Asian women and Middle Eastern gay men are far less excluded in the realm of intimacy than are others within their respective racial-ethnic groups. Moreover, black men are more likely than are black women to be preferred as possible dates. These findings extend the work of Feliciano et. al. 2009, that show the importance of gender in the construction of racial-ethnic hierarchies of inclusion among white online daters. Sexual orientation is an equally important construct that intersects with gender to determine the degree of racial-ethnic inclusion by whites within the domain of intimacy.



Figure 1: Preferences for Race-Ethnicity Among White Daters, by Gender-Sexuality (N=2,387)

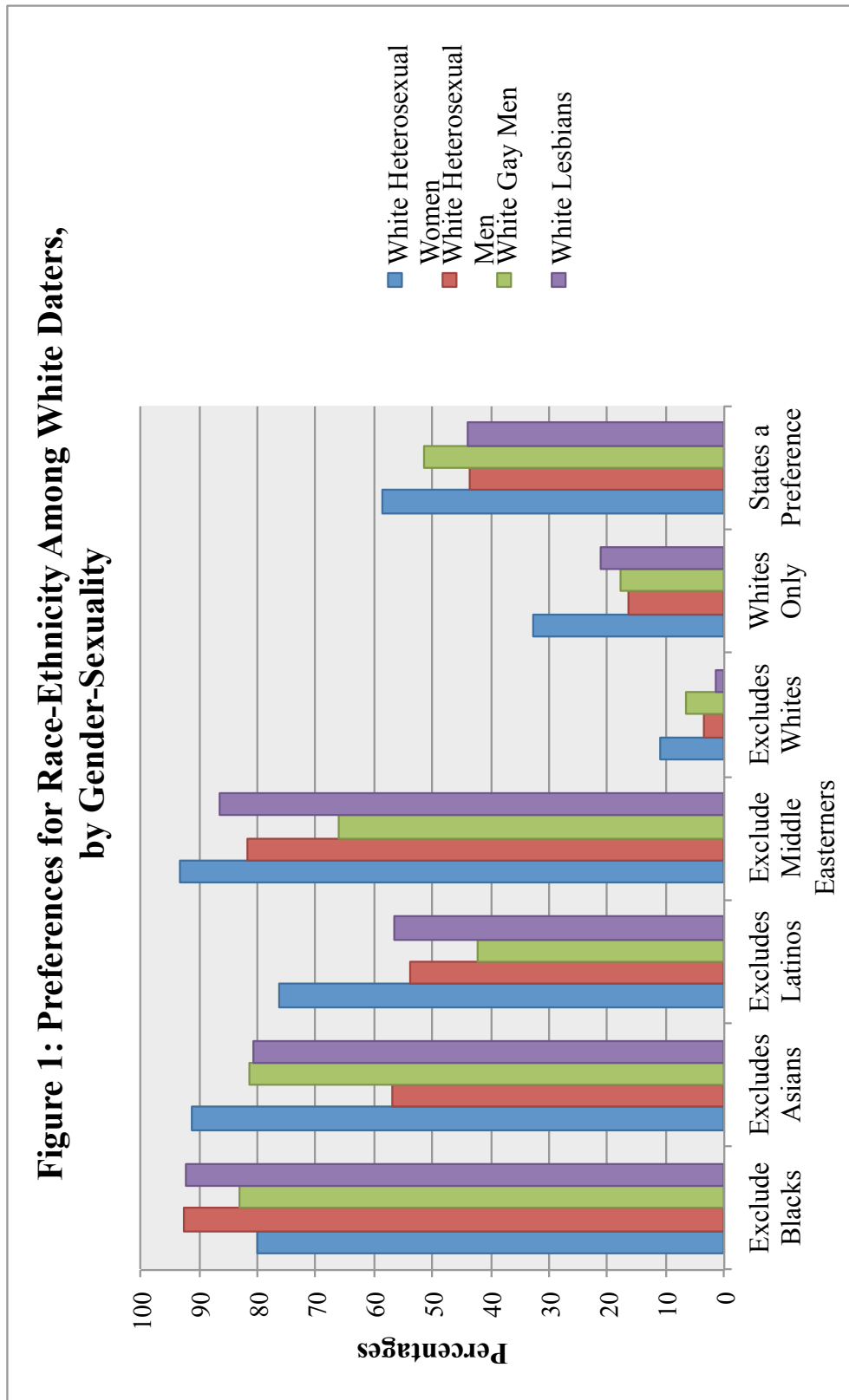
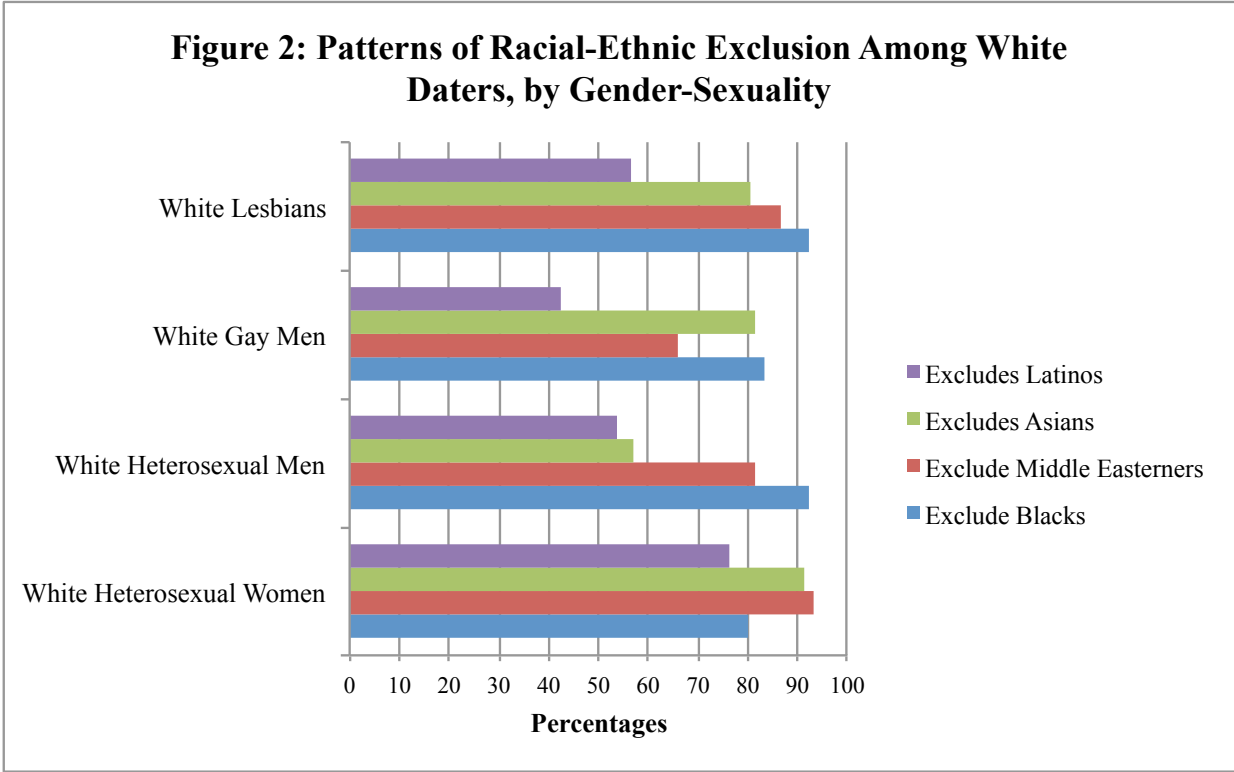


Figure 2: Patterns of Racial-Ethnic Exclusion Among White Daters, by Gender-Sexuality (N=1,439)



Note: Those with no stated preference are not shown.

Table 1: Characteristics of Sample of White Daters, 2011

	Heterosexual Women		Lesbians		Heterosexual Men		Gay Men	
	All	w/Stated race pref	All	w/Stated race pref	All	w/Stated race pref	All	w/Stated race pref
Age	35.40	36.86	32.88	33.26	34.82	33.40	37.40	38.21
<i>Body type (%)</i>								
Thick, a few extra lbs, large, and voluptuous	57.68	58.27	61.60	62.46	52.65	52.19	55.12	52.19
Slim, slender, average, athletic, and fit	38.73	39.26	34.04	32.69	46.00	45.94	43.34	45.94
<i>Region (%)</i>								
Los Angeles	23.93	20.99	23.04	19.06	23.74	19.06	23.28	24.20
New York City	25.59	21.23	24.70	23.75	24.69	23.75	24.54	24.44
Chicago	24.76	25.43	25.75	23.75	25.64	23.75	25.95	22.72
Atlanta	25.73	32.35	26.51	33.44	25.92	33.44	26.23	28.64
<i>Educational attainment (%)</i>								
High school only	8.71	8.64	13.10	17.48	11.40	14.38	7.99	8.40
Some college	33.61	33.58	31.93	31.07	31.34	34.38	25.67	26.42
College graduate	24.90	25.68	26.20	24.92	30.12	30.94	35.34	34.57
Post-graduate	19.23	19.26	16.87	14.56	16.28	13.12	21.18	22.72
<i>Religious Affiliation (%)</i>								
Not religious	19.92	18.02	34.49	32.04	17.91	18.75	38.01	36.79
Other religion	3.04	1.98	6.63	5.50	3.12	2.50	3.93	4.20
Christian/Jewish	59.61	64.94	35.09	39.48	61.60	63.44	37.17	39.01
No answer	17.43	15.06	23.80	22.98	17.37	15.31	20.90	20.00

**Table 1:** Characteristics of Sample of White Daters, 2011 (Cont.)

	Heterosexual Women		Lesbians		Heterosexual Men		Gay Men	
	All	w/Stated race pref	All	w/Stated race pref	All	w/Stated race pref	All	w/Stated race pref
<i>Political affiliations (%)</i>								
Liberal or very liberal	81.01	83.08	59.69	64.74	86.04	89.12	63.68	64.19
Conservative, very conservative, middle of the road, not political, no answer	18.99	16.92	40.31	35.25	13.96	10.88	36.32	35.81
Percent of other items with stated preferences (except race/ethnicity)								
Number of racial/ethnic groups preferred	49.90	59.44	43.74	51.31	41.29	54.56	44.50	50.44
Stated preference for race/ethnicity								
Stated preference for education	58.67	100.00	43.86	100.00	43.68	100.00	51.46	100.00
Stated preference for religion	47.72	65.43	55.12	53.40	66.17	50.62	56.94	52.84
Stated preference for body type	59.47	56.05	73.30	35.92	75.54	44.69	79.52	28.64
	52.28	66.42	60.54	75.40	65.13	86.25	75.74	85.93
N	723	405	664	405	737	320	713	405

Table 2: Racial-Ethnic Exclusion Among White Daters by Gender-Sexuality, Relative Risk Ratios from Multinomial Regressions

	Excludes (vs. Prefers)	Any/No Pref. (vs. Prefers)
<b>Exclude Blacks</b>		
White Heterosexual Women	0.64	0.42*
White Gay Men	0.73	0.39**
White Lesbians (ref: White Heterosexual Men)	2.00 <sup>^</sup>	1.57
<b>Exclude Asians</b>		
White Heterosexual Women	9.04***	3.34***
White Gay Men	4.93***	1.61*
White Lesbians (ref: White Heterosexual Men)	3.678**	2.07**
<b>Exclude Latinos</b>		
White Heterosexual Women	2.79***	1.19
White Gay Men	0.80	0.47***
White Lesbians (ref: White Heterosexual Men)	1.23	0.94
<b>Exclude Middle Easterners</b>		
White Heterosexual Women	2.79**	1.54
White Gay Men	0.54**	0.33***
White Lesbians (ref: White Heterosexual Men)	1.93*	1.46

Notes: N=2,387. Models include controls for age, education, body type, height, political views, region, and preferences for religion, education, body type, choosiness, and number of racial preferences.  
<sup>^</sup> p<.10, \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\* p<.001.

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