How Americans (Mostly Don't) Find an Interracial Partner:

Race and Ethnic Differences in the Use of Social Foci and Networks for Couple Formation

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Abstract

The reproduction of racial and ethnic divisions depends upon the pairings of homogeneous couples to create new homogeneous families. To understand better how the structures of opportunities for finding potential mates contributes to homogamy, I examine a unique nationally representative data set that includes American's stories of how they found their partner. Different racial-ethnic combinations of couples meet in different ways, but most of these differences disappear when controlling for other demographic factors. Some types of couples are significantly more likely to have met as strangers in public settings, including Internet dating and bars, and less likely to have met through social introductions: these include same-sex male couples (particularly inter-ethnic male couples), different-sex black couples, black and white couples, and black and Hispanic couples.

The Structure of Romantic Opportunities

Every couple has their story of how they met, the founding myth of their social unit. Behind the cocktail party and fireside story is an event of monumental social import, one that is constantly reoccurring, and upon which the social reproduction of society hinges. The ways in which these series of events play out determine the segregation and inherited inequality that differentiate families by social class and ethnicity: if couples were random pairings of starstruck lovers, inheritance of such distinctions would not persist. People pair off in very non-random ways (Kalmijn 1998; Qian & Lichter 2007), partly through cultural-social-psychological mechanisms which guide personal choices that lead to very homogenous couples. But at least as important are the structures of opportunities (and barriers) to even make these choices (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook 2001). These are the culturally legitimate settings in which people find their mates, and whose segregation predetermines a great deal of the segregation of society.

The structure of these opportunities is often only discussed in the abstract, assumed to be averaged out in the aggregate, or left as an unknown or inferred factor. Peter Blau reinvigorated interest in such structural constraints on inter-group contact, and yet his research only looked at local geographic distributions of groups and their socioeconomic status (Blau, Blum & Schwartz 1982; Blau & Schwartz 1984). Even when the evidence is not direct, the influence of this structure on mate choice can clearly be profound: studies of early-20th century American cities found that people on average found spouses who had lived mere blocks away from them (Bossard 1932; Kennedy 1943). Bozon and Heran (1989) found consistently strong class patterns throughout the 20th century in how French couples met, with the degree and nature of exclusivity of the setting of first meeting varying directly with social status. While French sociologists collected and analyzed such information for generations, a large generalizable study of how Americans meet their significant others was absent until recently (Rosenfeld & Thomas 2011).

I think its most useful to group the sources of opportunities for finding social partners into two

main categories: existing social relationships, which I'll call Transitive opportunities, and social spaces and events, which I'll call Social Foci.

Social Foci

The settings in which people meet and develop social relationships can be called social foci (Feld 1981). This includes physical spaces that have some combination of culturally legitimacy and practical usefulness for meeting and strengthening bonds with people. This also includes events, organizations, and institutions that exist more in social space than a specific physical location. An artistic scene in a particular era can very effectively act as a social foci, as can longer-lasting institutions like the Marine Corps or elementary schools. Foci vary in their effectiveness at incubating ties, and in the kinds of ties they encourage. The crosstown bus, Alcoholics Anonymous, and the water cooler in the office are all social foci that encourage and allow different kinds of interactions to forge different bonds. If a sub-population of people rely upon a particular set of social foci heavily for finding potential romantic partners, then the ways in which those foci are segregated will strongly determine the segregation of the couples that result.

Transitivity

Opportunities for meeting others often come not through social and physical entities, but through one's existing social relationships. The network of social ties in which people are embedded connect them indirectly to countless other people, and searches for potential romantic partners can occur through these chains of connections. One can imagine active searches, where a seeker directly requests that all of her connections query their connections, and so forth, to find a suitable mate for the seeker. But information about potential mates flows through social ties in less overtly requested ways, both through idle gossip, and through the natural closing of intransitive triads that occurs between strong ties (Granovetter 1973). The general logic of transitivity, if A-B and B-C then A-C, also applies

to social relationships, in that if Albert and Bob spend a great deal of time together, and Bob and Charlene also spend much time together, then chances are that Albert and Charlene are going to at least meet, and probably end up at the same social events. But its the transitive introductions to new people through weaker relationships that are more likely to be the source of finding new partners. One probably already knows everyone who one's closest friends and family know well.

These social network introductions can also structurally induce homogeneity in couples, in that they tend to reproduce the same kinds of homogeneity that are already present in networks of friends, family, and associates. Such networks tend to be homogenous by race and social class (Marsden 1987; 1990), so one should expect the same from the couples produced by transitive introductions.

In previous research I've shown that ways in which people meet their friends is related to the diversity of their friendships (Thomas 2009): the foci and transitive introductions of early life, based around family and neighborhood, tend to produce more racial homogeneity, while the workplace and voluntary organization foci of adulthood lead to more racial heterogeneity in friends. Here I expect to similarly find that foci and introductions from early school, neighbors, family, and existing friendship networks will be more related to homogenous couple formation, while less exclusive settings will be more often the source of heterogenous couples.

H1: Meeting through social foci associated with schooling and child rearing will be negatively related to couple's ethnic/racial diversity.

H2: Meeting through transitive introductions will be negatively related to couple's ethnic/racial diversity.

Challenging Dating/Marriage Markets

Where the availability of suitable mates is high, respondents may find their mates through the

settings and networks that otherwise occupy their time. Young heterosexuals in coeducational schools typically spend most of their time in homogeneous social foci populated by similarly available potential mates, so its no surprise that their romantic searches end close to home. When suitable mates are not so readily availablein daily life, partner seekers are more likely to turn to nontraditional sources.

Same sex couples are a classic example of a group that faces such a “thin market”: they represent a small minority of the total population, but unlike ethnic minorities, they usually begin life in families and neighborhoods of the majority sexuality, with far fewer suitable matches for them. They also contend with traditional proscriptions and outright persecutions that strongly limit their ability to use hetero-typical mating foci and networks. Many overcome this by migrating to cities with larger GLBT minority populations, but even in these meccas the common meeting places of schooling and work are still less likely to be rich in potential same sex mates. Voluntary organizations and clubs, bars and restaurants identified with GLBT culture often fill the role of primary romantic social foci. Even before the rise of the Internet, classified ads and phone chat lines played a greater role for same sex romance seekers than for heterosexuals, and in recent years Internet dating has become the primary source of new same sex couples (Rosenfeld and Thomas 2011). In areas with smaller and/or more persecuted same sex minorities, the search for a mate necessarily involves greater deliberation and care, and is even more likely to involve the Internet.

Age can also limit the availability of potential mates. As people age from youth into middle age, the percentage of the population that is married increases, and the availability of men decreases steadily into older age. Combined with social norms that limit matches between women with men younger than them, this produces shortages of heterosexual male mates for middle aged and older women (England & McClintock 2010). For both genders, once they leave the school-dominated world of youth, they often find their friends' social lives shifting towards child rearing, with opportunities for meeting potential mates rapidly diminishing in their early middle ages. Not surprisingly, this is the age group most likely to utilize the Internet to meet new romantic partners (Rosenfeld & Thomas 2011).

African American women in America also face a thin market for mates (which can be compounded by age, as above). High incarceration and unemployment rates for African American men (Lyons & Pettit 2011; Western 2002) lower their availability for marriage (Lopoo & Western 2005), which, combined with greater racial heterogamy rates for black men than women (Crowder & Tolnay 2000; Jacobs & Labov 2002), have created a shortage of potential partners for black women. It remains to be seen if this has lead to greater use of nontraditional sources of partners.

H3: Groups for whom partners are rare or harder to locate will be more likely to have met their partners in nontraditional ways.

Data

Nationally representative information on how couples find each other has been very limited in the past to a few multiple choice questions with broad mutually-exclusive categories in surveys like the National Health and Social Life Survey (Laumann et al 1992). This data wasn't without its insights, such as reaffirming the importance of friends and family as sources of introductions to partners (Laumann et al 1994), but the categorization was simple, and in particular ignored that multiple entities and settings can be involved in a single couple's creation. The use of Internet-administered surveys has made it easier and more affordable to gather much more detailed information, though often at the expense of sampling the general population. The data set I use here, How Couples Meet and Stay Together (Rosenfeld and Thomas 2009) was gathered using Knowledge Networks' panel of respondents, who were sampled from the English-speaking U.S. Population by random digit dialing, and then recruited to participate in web surveys for payment. Respondents who did not initially have Internet access were given Web TV. The survey focused on respondents who answered that they were married, in a romantic or sexual relationship, and asked them a battery of questions about their partner, how they met, and the quality of their relationship. To gauge how they met, the survey simply asked:

Please write the story of how you and [Partner_Name] first met and got to know one another and be sure to describe "how" and "where" you first met.

The survey gave the respondent a large blank text box to fill. Regardless of how much the respondent wrote in the box, the survey prompted them “Please add more details, we want to understand your story!” after they submitted their answer, and prompted them with this a second time if their answer was still less than 100 characters. This pressure resulted in fairly detailed answers from the great majority of respondents: the median story was 271 characters long, with 75% longer than 148 characters and 25% longer than 480 characters.

These answers were open-coded by the data authors to induce a number of categories of meetings, not mutually exclusive, and then recoded by this scheme by the authors and an additional coder, with a high degree of inter-coder reliability.

Methods & Results

Comparing Couples by Type

Tables 1a and 1b display background statistics on the respondents and the couples they are part of, broken down by different couple combinations of race\ethnicity and gender, with different sex couples in the first table, same sex couples in the second. Basic differences in the ages, lengths of relationships, income and education, etc of these different combinations should give us pause in jumping to any conclusions from any simple bi-variate analysis. Differences between couple types could be due to differences in the prevalence of marriage and cohabitation within these types, or due to difference in the average lengths of time they've been together, etc. The differences in how couples meet as displayed in Tables 2a and 2b are still quite real and consequential, but the disentangling of the roles played by race, gender composition and other demographic factors on how couples find each other can only be done with multivariate analysis.

Note that some categories of couples represent a very small percentage of all U.S. couples, and

because most of these weren't oversampled by this data (though same sex couples were oversampled), the numbers we have for them here are too small to make many reliable comparisons. I've omitted couples types that included less than 9 respondents from the tables. Among the different sex couples, this includes black & Asian couples, and most couples including one or more Native American or Other\Multiracial partner. Among same sex couples the sample sizes were more problematic, so some columns represent all couples that include more than one ethnicity. Descriptive statistics for couple categories with small sample sizes should still be read with caution, as sampling error and small biases in recruitment and response can make large differences in their results. All couples types are included in the multivariate analysis below.

Tables 2a and 2b summarizes how couples met each other, by ethnicity and gender. The categories of types of meetings are not mutually exclusive, unless they specify “Only.” Among the many categories of types of first meetings, I include here the most common and interesting specific types, and group them into three larger meta-types of meetings: Transitive meetings, Institutional meetings, and Non-Exclusive meetings. Transitive meetings include all stories that mention someone the respondent or partner already knew who played a role in introducing the couple to each other. Institutional meetings are all stories that include an exclusive, institutionalized setting (social foci) that facilitated their introduction. This includes any club or group that has a membership; even if it may technically be open and welcoming to the public (like most churches), the setting still acts as a filter that selectively exposes participants to a culturally-particular subset of the larger population. Non-exclusive meetings are only those stories that don't mention institutions or previously-existing social network connections, but instead occur between strangers in a mostly public setting. This can include bars and restaurants when they aren't being used as a location for an institutional meeting or private get together, as well as relationships that begin as commercial transactions between a customer and a clerk, waiter, or other service provider. This also includes meetings that occur between strangers on the street or other public space, as well as the use of the Internet to find partners who would otherwise be

strangers. In Tables 2a and 2b, only the Non-Exclusive broad category precludes the other two, but in the multivariate analysis below I will treat these three as mutually exclusive, by counting any meeting facilitated by existing relationships as Transitive.

There are a number of large differences between ethnic combinations of heterosexual couples (Table 2b) in the use of these different social opportunities to find their mates. Some of the biggest differences focus on meetings in public, meetings between customers and service providers, and meetings online. White non-Hispanic couples tend to use these much less often, while many other couple types quite frequently meet these ways. Though black women with white men is a rare couple type with only 16 such couples in our data, it is nonetheless interesting to note that the great majority of them met in non-exclusive settings, with fully a third meeting in restaurants or bars, and almost a third meeting solely online, and only 14% meeting through social networks. Black men with white women, by comparison, met in similar ways to black homogeneous couples, most often through transitive introductions, but also more use of non-exclusive settings. Black men and Hispanic women met very often as strangers in non-exclusive settings, more than 30% as strangers in a public space. The greatest use of institutional settings to meet is exhibited by the couples that include a white partner and a partner not identified with any of the major race categories; these small N categories of couples also have unusually high salaries and levels of education.

Among same sex couples (Table 2a), transitive introductions are most common for female couples, while non-exclusive meetings were the most common for male couples. The vast majority (almost 82%) of ethnically heterogeneous male couples met this way, mostly as strangers in a bar or club or through the Internet. White homogeneous and Hispanic homogeneous male couples were more likely to have met through coworkers or friends, or through a voluntary organization, but still predominantly met through less exclusive settings. White homogeneous lesbians, on the other hand, mostly met through friends or coworkers, and though they rarely met through family ties, the distribution of their meetings across the three broad categories does not significantly differ from white

homogeneous heterosexual couples. Ethnically heterogeneous lesbian couples are more likely to have met through institutional settings like school or voluntary organizations than white homogeneous lesbians, and much more likely to have met through family, but otherwise show similar patterns of meeting.

Predicting How Couples Met

To properly isolate the relationship between the type of heterogeneity in couples and how they met, controlling for their other characteristics, I use a multinomial logistic regression model to predict the broad category of how couples met based on the type of couple. Table 3 displays the log odds and odds ratios from this model.

The results from this model that stand out as the strongest are the differences in the use of transitive versus non-exclusive opportunities, both between same sex and different sex couples, and between white homogenous couples and most of the couples involving a black partner (black homogeneous, black and Hispanic, and black and white couples). In both sets of comparisons, the more common type of couple (heterosexual and white homogeneous) are much more likely to have met through a social network intermediary, while the couple type in the minority (same sex and couples with a black partner) is much more likely to have met in a nonexclusive venue, such as through the Internet or as strangers in a public setting. For same sex couples and these black interracial couples, this difference is quite large, roughly three times greater odds of having met in a non-exclusive setting as strangers, while for the black homogenous couples its still almost double the odds compared to the white homogenous couples. There weren't any meaningful differences between the use of institutions versus social networks (transitive meetings) by couple type, if we dismiss the small black-Asian couple sub-sample as unreliable, and also ignore the marginally-significant difference for Hispanic-Anglo couples meeting less institutionally. We also see, consistent with previous research (Bozon & Herron 1989), that more highly educated individuals are more likely to have met their partners in exclusive

settings, both institutional and transitive. The coefficients for age predict less exclusivity for older respondents, while the model also shows that couples that have been together longer tend to have met through more exclusive settings. The combined effect of these two variables for older couples with older relationships doesn't quite cancel out, but favors exclusivity: the oldest relationships tend to be made through settings like family, neighborhood relationships, early schooling, and friendship introductions.

Discussion

The first two hypotheses put forth in the beginning of this paper are not fully supported by this analysis. Despite the large differences in use of settings evident in the bivariate and finely-diced results of Tables 2a and 2b, race-ethnic heterogeneous couples overall did not significantly differ in their use of the broader categories of initial meetings to find each other, once potential confounding factors were controlled for. The significant effects of the couples that crossed the black-white and black-Hispanic racial boundaries were stronger than those of the black homogenous couples, but is still a similar pattern. Within same sex male couples, multivariate analysis (not shown here) did show that ethnically heterogenous couples were more likely to have met through nonexclusive settings, providing population-specific support for H1 and H2. Different sex inter-ethnic couples do meet less often through family connections, but these results seem to suggest that any differences in their use of coworkers and friends to meet can be explained by correlated social factors. Different sex couples that include a black and white member show more use of one important nontraditional venue: they are 2.6 times more likely than white homogeneous couples to have met online, controlling for other factors. Yet for the most part, heterosexual couples that cross most racial-ethnic boundaries seem to be finding each other in ways that are not that different from ethnically homogenous couples who are similarly educated, aged, etc.

The results for same-sex male couples here confirms what has been found and suggested

elsewhere: same sex couples find each other less through traditional mate-seeking channels, but instead search through alternatives that increasingly include Internet dating (Rosenfeld & Thomas 2011). This would seem to confirm my third hypothesis, but this only holds for male same sex-couples. Lesbian couples, despite facing the same thin market challenges as men seeking men, meet in ways mostly similar to heterosexuals. The voluntary organizations and social networks that bring lesbian couples together might be different in character from mainstream heterosexual settings, but their primary use of exclusive settings and introductions is not.

The greater use of non-exclusive settings for finding mates by black homogenous and black interracial couples, compared to white homogenous couples, could be read as an indication of a thin and challenging dating market for black Americans, and a partial confirmation of H3. If black families, neighborhoods and social networks of friends are not producing black couples as effectively as the corresponding white networks and social foci, then this could explain the greater relative use of public spaces to meet prospective partners. Much of the literature mentioned above focuses on the plight of African American women in the dating market, but the results here suggest that African American men are also meeting partners disproportionately through public settings (an interaction test for gender and race in the model was insignificant). Note, however, that couples including a black man and a white woman most often met through friends or coworkers, which was very rare for couples of black women and white men, though the small sub-sample sizes make this comparison statistically insignificant.

A possible explanation for any of the differences above is that they are purely in the telling of the stories. If black culture, or homosexual culture, is more likely to downplay the role of intermediaries and accentuate individual agency to making one's own connection, then this could under count transitive connections, and over-estimate meetings among strangers. A similar, but flipped interpretation is that one or both of these culture may take more for granted the embeddedness of people within networks of relationships than the mainstream white culture does, such that there is no need to highlight the roles of other people in introducing or telling one about a potential mate, it is

taken for granted. If it can be assumed that two people in a neighborhood should have already become aware of each other through shared ties, then that part of the story isn't interesting, and can be elided. If, however, the teller of the story finds it odd that other people could play such an important role in finding their mate, then that part of the story may be accentuated.

Unfortunately, it is nearly impossible to tell the difference between stories that are different due to cultural emphasis and stories that are factually different in their chains of events. But we do have some clues that suggest that the difference is more likely one of facts. First, there is a lack of Latino-Anglo differences in how couples meet, as well as Asian-white differences, despite cultural and linguistic differences. Secondly, there is not a gender difference in the telling of how couples meet: male and female heterosexuals are equally likely to mention each of the categories of meetings, even for the more specific types of meetings (though women are a little more likely to mention three intermediaries when the middle one is a neighbor or coworker, but men are still just as likely to mention three intermediaries in general). As the male and female versions of stories should match up in the aggregate for heterosexual couples within a society, this lack of a gender effect is good evidence that these stories aren't very fungible, at least by the categories we've coded them as. Finally, if we look at couples that include a black and a non-black member, it doesn't matter which one completed the survey: there aren't statistically significant differences in mentioning non-exclusive meeting places between them. A difference-in-storytelling explanation for the black-white difference would have to be one unique to black Americans and those who partner with them, and different from everybody else, a response bias that isn't susceptible to gender effects and other cultural differences.

A different cultural explanation might accept these numbers as representing actual differences in how couples meet, and explains them as a different cultural norms of courtship and opportunities for potential partners. Bozon and Heran (1989) noted the different norms within France, by social class, in the use of public space and events to find potential mates, with the economic and social elites avoiding this, while the rural and working classes embraced it. It may simply be that Black America and Gay

America are more open and less exclusive in judging when and where it is acceptable to meet new people. Looking for regional differences in the US, the Northeast is the outlier that uses public meetings to find mates the most, but the difference in between black and white couples remains within regions.

Instead of treating Black and same-sex couples as the outliers that need to be explained, one might instead problematize the White heterosexual majority, and ask what makes them seek partners more often through brokered settings and connections. Excluding racial others, particularly African Americans, from White dating and mating settings has long been a key part of homgamy in America. The institutionalization of which settings are acceptable and appropriate for finding partners, and which seem "sketchy," can continue these practices even when explicit racial preferences become unacceptable, perhaps even if/where they become very weak. Perhaps it should not be surprising that the ethnic group historically most targeted for exclusion is the group that is the least dependent on exclusive settings for finding partners.

Conclusion

Understanding where and how couples find each other is more than just nosy curiosity or grist for the self-help industry's mill: it is the source of the reproduction of the family unit, and of all the inequalities and segregation that correspond. This is still an area of research rich in anecdote and folk wisdom but vague and shallow in social scientific understanding. Hopefully this research represents a step in the right direction, though a work in progress, to understanding the pathways into ethnic homogamy versus boundary transgression. Oversampling ethnically heterogeneous couples may be the biggest necessary next step in the development this line of research, particularly aimed at acquiring larger samples of the rarer combinations of interracial couples. Though difficult and potentially expensive, it won't otherwise be possible to understand how the different racial-gender boundaries in America are bridged without gathering information from more of these exceptional couples.

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Table 1a: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents in Hetero-sexual Couples, by Gender and Ethnic Composition

	White M - F	Black M - F	Hispn M - F	Asian M - F	Blk F Wh M	Wh F Blk M	Wh F As M	As F Wh M	Wh F His M	His F Wh M	Blk F His M	Blk M His F	Oth F Wh M	Oth M Wh F	NA F Wh M	NA M Wh F
Respondent Information																
Mean Age	47	48	42.2	33.1	45.3	41.5	32	46.2	44.6	46.7	38.1	41	32.3	38.7	38.9	53.3
College Degree %	27.5	24.5	20.9	58.6	16.6	41	81.1	44.4	29.8	15.5	10.3	10.6	36.4	78.2	4	13.4
Mean HH Income in $1000's	63.4	48.5	58.2	81.2	48.1	63.1	83.8	69.5	69.1	65.1	42.1	52.9	100.9	69.6	43.8	39.6
Median HH Income in $1000s	55	45	55	73.6	41.1	61.1	67.3	55	67.3	55	27.3	55	67.3	67.3	37.3	32.3
# of Children in R's HH	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.5	1.2	0.6	0.3	0.2
Median Miles from R's Hometown	20	10	20	6560	5	45	1040	420	40	125	35	0	220	80	30	90
% US Raised	97.8	96.5	72.9	50.2	95.2	82.8	100	61	90.1	94.1	95.2	100	60.7	93.9	97.9	100
Couple Info																
% Married	75.4	62.6	76.9	81.9	37.8	69	43.9	74.3	75.4	65.5	22.4	50.5	76.5	53.9	38.2	42
% Coresident	80.1	60	83.5	79.1	64.2	60.9	73.2	85.8	87.1	74.8	49.8	71.8	84.9	71.8	87.7	88.6
Mean years since first met	21.5	21.2	19.1	10.4	5.7	18.8	5.9	19.3	17.5	17.7	9.5	14.1	13.3	14.9	17.7	21.2
Mean years since first romance	19.9	18.6	17.3	9.9	5.6	17.6	5.8	18.7	16.8	16.2	7.9	11.8	12.7	12.9	12.1	18.5
Mean Age Gap	4.1	4.6	4.9	4	6	4	3.9	5.3	6.1	5.7	4.7	7.1	6	6.9	4.3	2.2
Mean Educ. Gap (yrs)	1.6	1.7	2.3	1.2	1.4	1.7	0.7	3.8	1.8	1.8	3.2	2.5	0.86	1.8	0.68	2.2
Column as % of All Couples in U.S.	64.2	7.8	5.5	1.5	0.7	0.9	0.4	1.4	5.6	3.6	0.7	1.4	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.6
N	1827	167	118	24	16	24	9	31	116	81	12	24	13	11	15	11

Data Source: How Couples Meet and Stay Together (2009)

All means, medians and percentages are calculated using survey design weights (weight2).

Black-Asian, Hispanic-Asian, and most Native American and Other Ethnicity couples omitted due to very small N.

Table 1b: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents in Same-Sex Couples, by Gender and Ethnic Composition

	All F - F	All M - M	White NH F - F	Inter-ethnic F - F	White NH M - M	Inter-ethnic M - M	Hispanic M - M	Hispan-White M – M
Respondent Information								
Mean Age	40.6	42.6	41.7	39.6	45.4	43.3	33.1	51.4
College Degree %	47.1	42.4	42.1	51.5	60.1	20.7	31.8	20.4
Mean HH Income in $1000's	63	69.2	67	51.3	78.9	54.3	67.1	63.9
Median HH Income in $1000s	55	55	55	45	67.3	45	55	45
# of Children in R's HH	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.3	0	0.1	0.4	0.1
Median Miles from R's Hometown	100	150	160	10	100	150	10	840
% US Raised	92.7	96.6	98.2	92.9	98.9	96.5	89.7	96.8
Couple Info								
% Married	22.2	23.7	19	21.4	18.4	29	27.4	51.5
% Coresident	79.8	63.8	82	73.8	69.3	53.1	68.5	73.7
Mean years since first met	10.4	11.5	10.9	10.5	13.4	11.8	5.7	19.1
Mean years since first romance	9.3	11.2	9.8	8.9	13	11.3	5.7	18.7
Mean Age Gap	4.6	5	3.7	6.6	5.4	5.1	3.8	4.4
Mean Educ. Gap (yrs)	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.7	2	1.4	1.5
Column as % of All Couples in U.S.	0.8	1.1	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2
N	232	242	165	53	165	61	10	29

Data Source: How Couples Meet and Stay Together (2009)
All means, medians and percentages are calculated using survey design weights (weight2).
Most ethnic combinations omitted due to very small N.

Table 2a: Bivariate Percentages of Same-Sex Couple Introductions by Gender and Ethnic Composition

	All F - F	All M - M	White NH F - F	Inter-ethnic F - F	White NH M - M	Inter-ethnic M - M	Hispanic M - M	Hispan-Wht M – M
Transitive	51.9	34.7	60	50.5	46.5	12.7	34.5	10.6
Through Friends	26	19.7	30.3	24.3	31.7	9	0	8
Through Family	7.7	0.1	3.5	18.6	0.2	0	0	0
Through Coworkers	22.3	12.7	29.8	15.5	11.5	1.2	34.5	1.8
Institutional	29.8	22.1	24.3	33.8	17.9	3.7	61.2	4.5
Primary/ Secondary School	6.5	0	4.5	12.7	0	0	0	0
College	10.9	9.1	8.2	5.1	6.8	1.2	27.9	1.9
Church	1.3	1.5	1.4	0.9	3	0	0	0
Voluntary Org	16.7	13.2	14.4	25	10.8	3.7	33.3	4.5
While in Military	1	0.3	0.5	2.3	0.6	0	0	0
Non-exclusive	22.3	51.6	20.4	18.9	42.3	81.9	32.2	83.3
Internet Only	22.5	26.5	25	14.5	26.3	33.6	18.1	22.9
Internet At All	24.1	27.3	24.9	18				22.9
In a Public Place	4.7	6	4.3	4.3	7.2	3.8	5.5	1.2
Bar/Restaurant, not Transitive	1	19	0.2	0.7	10.7	40.7	8.7	58.2
Customer & Service Provider	4	2.1	3.3	5.2	3.1	1.9	0	1.5
Column as % of All Couples in U.S.	0.8	1.1	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2
N	232	242	165	53	165	61	10	29

Data Source: How Couples Meet and Stay Together (2009)
Unless specified, meeting types are not mutually exclusive.
All percentages are calculated using survey design weights (weight2).
Most ethnic combinations omitted due to very small N.

Table 2b: Bivariate Percentages of Hetero-Sexual Couple Introductions by Gender and Ethnic Composition

	White M - F	Black M - F	Hispn M - F	Asian M - F	Blk F Wh M	Wh F Blk M	Wh F As M	As F Wh M	Wh F His M	His F Wh M	Blk F His M	Blk M His F	Oth F Wh M	Oth M Wh F	NA F Wh M	NA M Wh F
Transitive	64.7	53.2	62.3	46.8	14.1	59.8	67	58.1	71.8	68	43.5	30.2	76	58.8	67.4	99.7
Through Friends	36.8	27.9	35.4	41.3	11.7	21.9	48.6	32.8	42.3	45	43.5	16.7	24.3	39.7	67.4	88.6
Through Family	19.6	15.5	26.9	8.1	8	10.4	15.9	9.9	9	19.1	2	7.6	48.4	11.1	5.5	33.6
Through Coworkers	17.8	11.1	15.8	3.6	0	33.1	10.5	17.6	25.4	18.1	3.8	6.5	3.4	15.9	0	23.9
Institutional	33.1	23.3	21.6	31.6	11.8	24.8	54	32.3	26.5	17.2	25.2	38.7	58.7	51.5	32.1	19.6
Primary/ Secondary School	12.9	10.5	14	10.6	0	13.6	0	0	10.4	8.6	0	3.3	32.7	15.5	0.9	11.4
College	9.3	8.4	3.3	13.1	0	0.3	54	4.3	5.8	4	0	3.3	20.8	36	0	0
Church	7.7	4.3	5.9	0	0.4	0	0	7.3	4.4	4.4	0	17	4.4	0	10.4	11.4
Voluntary Org	6	2.6	0.6	16.3	11.4	5.9	13.1	5.4	6.1	0.9	25.2	2.8	0.8	0	20.8	8.1
While in Military	3.5	2.8	1.3	0	0	5	0	19.6	3.5	0	0	12.3	0	0	0	8.1
Non-exclusive	18.6	32.1	23	31	74.6	30.4	0	26.7	16.2	26.7	31.2	43.2	3.2	23.3	33.8	0.3
Internet Only	5.1	4.1	1.6	11.4	30.9	10	0	6.6	5.8	6	11.5	0	0	0	1.1	0
Internet At All	5.6	4.8	3.2	18.1	30.9	10	0	6.6	7.6	14.5	11.5	0	0	0	2	0
In a Public Place	6.3	19.5	13.8	10.6	2.5	20	0	0.5	8.3	15.1	19.8	31.1	0	6	1.1	0
Bar/Restaurant, not Transitive	8.3	5.7	7.8	9	32.5	3.8	0	0.5	4.4	5.5	0	17.3	0	0	0	0.3
Customer & Service Provider	8.4	9.3	14.7	0	14.2	4.6	0	12	5.7	20.1	0	12.3	3.2	14.5	26.7	0
Column as % of All Couples in U.S.	64.2	7.8	5.5	1.5	0.7	0.9	0.4	1.4	5.6	3.6	0.7	1.4	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.6
N	1827	167	118	24	16	24	9	31	116	81	12	24	13	11	15	11

Data Source: How Couples Meet and Stay Together (2009) All percentages are calculated using survey design weights (weight2).
Unless specified, meeting types are not mutually exclusive.
Black-Asian, Hispanic-Asian, and most Native American and Other Ethnicity couples omitted due to very small N.

Table 3: Log Odds and Odds Ratios from a Multinomial Logistic Regression Model Predicting How Couples Met (Compared to Non-Exclusive Meetings)

	Transitive Meeting			Institutional Meeting		
	Log Odds		Odds Ratio	Log Odds		Odds Ratio
Couple Ethnic Composition (vs. White NH Homogenous)						
Black Homogenous	-0.62	**	0.54	-0.48		0.62
Hispanic Homogenous	-0.26		0.77	-0.44		0.64
Asian Homogenous	-0.66		0.52	0.2		1.22
Black & White NH	-1.2	**	0.3	-1.06		0.35
Asian & White NH	0		1	0.39		1.48
Hispanic & WhiteNH	0.02		1.02	-0.6	+	0.55
Black & Hispanic	-1.01	*	0.36	0.4		1.49
Black & Asian	0.07		1.07	-22.7	***	0
Hispanic & Asian	-1.25		0.29	0.49		1.63
Other	0.07		1.07	0.33		1.39
Same Sex Couple	-1	***	0.37	-0.29		0.75
R's Age	-0.03	***	0.97	-0.08	***	0.92
Couple Age Diff	0		1	-0.03		0.97
R has BA	0.45	**	1.57	0.6	**	1.82
Couple Ed Years Diff	-0.02		0.98	-0.08		0.92
R's HH Income (in $10,000s)	0.01		1.01	0.04	+	1.04
# Children in R's HH	0.01		1.01	0.1		1.11
Miles from R's Hometown (in 100s)	-0.01		0.99	-0.01		0.99
R Raised in US	0.32		1.38	-0.05		0.95
Married Couple	-0.21		0.81	-0.32		0.73
Co-resident Couple	0.43	*	1.54	0.12		1.13
Years Since Couple First Met	0.03	***	1.03	0.08	***	1.08
Intercept	1.4			1.39		
F	35.7	***				
N	2888					

Data Source: How Couples Meet and Stay Together (2009)
*** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, + p<.1
Reference Category for multinomial logit is Non-Exclusive Meetings (not transitive nor institutional settings)
Model weighted using weight2