Diversity among Latinos:
How Observed Race Shapes Racial Preferences in Dating**

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Abstract

Understanding how different dimensions of race relate to Latinos' lived experiences may shed light on their assimilation trajectories. Existing research suggests that racial appearance influences Latinos' socioeconomic outcomes through discrimination *by* others. However, researchers have not examined how Latinos' observed race relates to their acceptance *of* other racial groups. Using a sample of over 6000 internet daters' profiles, this study finds that Latinos who appear White are most likely to exclude Blacks and include Whites as possible dates while the opposite is true for those classified as Black. Latinos perceived *as* Latino fall somewhere in between "White" Latinos and "Black" Latinos in their acceptance of Blacks and Whites. Thus, neither interviewer classifications nor self-identifications of race alone can adequately assess the assimilation patterns of Latinos: those perceived as White may assimilate into Whiteness, those perceived as Black may assimilate into Blackness, while those perceived as Latino may maintain an in-between status.

According to official federal guidelines, Latinos are considered an ethnic group who can be of any race. Yet, when confronted with the standard census questions that ask separately one's "Hispanic Origin" and one's race, many, if not most, Latinos reject official racial categories of White, Black, Asian, or Native American, choosing instead to mark "Other" or to not respond at all (Hitlin, Brown, and Elder 2007; Perez 2008; Rodriguez 2000; Roth 2010; Vaquera and Kao 2006). While some argue that including Hispanic or Latino as a census racial category would more closely correspond to Latinos' own conceptions of race (Campbell and Rogalin 2006; Hitlin, Brown, and Elder 2007; Perez 2008), others argue that the census's current racial categories capture the fact that many Latinos *are* socially White from the perspective of others (Patterson 2001). However, the latter argument is complicated by recent research findings showing that there is considerable mismatch between how Latinos self-identify in racial terms and their race as observed by outsiders (Roth 2010). These measurement issues ultimately stem from the socially constructed and multidimensional nature of race, and are important because using different measures of race may lead to different conclusions about the assimilation trajectories of distinct segments of the Latino population. For instance, some have suggested that because Native-born Latinos have higher intermarriage and cohabitation rates with Whites than other minorities do (Qian and Lichter 2007), Latinos are assimilating into the White mainstream (Yancey 2003). However, the relatively high rates of Latino intermarriage and cohabitation with Whites may mask persistent racial boundaries that privilege lighter skinned Latinos over those perceived as Black.

In this study, we examine whether the racial dating preferences of self-identified Latinos vary by their race as observed by outsiders. Because dating preferences feed into dating and marriage outcomes and thus marital assimilation, examining multiple measures of race can lend

new insight into the underlying dynamics behind the assimilation trajectories of the growing Latino population. While existing studies link Latinos' racial appearance to socioeconomic indicators of assimilation through others' discrimination against those with darker skin (Arce, Murguia, and Frisbie 1987; Bonilla-Silva 2004; Espino and Franz 2002; Frank, Akresh, and Lu 2010; Hunter 2005; Roth 2010; Telles and Murguia 1990), this study focuses instead on how Latinos' own acceptance of other racial groups varies by their observed race, thus revealing Latinos' agency in the process through which boundaries between racial groups diminish and assimilation occurs.

A growing body of scholarship considers the multidimensionality of the race concept by analyzing multiple measures of race (Ahmed, Feliciano, and Emigh 2007; Brown, Hitlin, and Elder 2006; Harris and Sim 2002; Roth 2010; Saperstein 2006; Saperstein 2008; Saperstein and Penner 2010; Telles and Lim 1998). While some research has treated racial appearance, most commonly measured by skin color, as a source of heterogeneity *within* racial groups, recent research emphasizes that because of the socially constructed nature of race, racial appearance is but one way we might conceive of the idea of the race (Rodriguez 2000; Roth 2005; Saperstein 2008). In other words, because race is not a fixed individual attribute but rather a relational concept, different measures of race, such as self-identifications vs. observer classifications, all contribute to how individuals experience race (Roth 2010; Saperstein 2008). This work recognizes that self-identifications of race do not always correspond to outsiders' classifications although the two are generated through dialectical processes (Ahmed, Feliciano, and Emigh 2007; Nagel 1994).

Although most of the existing research has focused on discrepancies in classification, such as between outsider and self-assessments, and the factors related to such discrepancies (Ahmed,

Feliciano, and Emigh 2007; Brown, Hitlin, and Elder 2006; Saperstein 2006; Saperstein and Penner 2010), a few existing studies have examined whether multiple measures of race are differentially associated with outcomes such as income (Bailey, Loveman, and Muniz ; Saperstein 2006; Telles and Lim 1998), education (Bruch and Loveman 2011; Campbell 2009), criminal justice system contact (Penner, Saperstein, and Kizer 2012), and health (Saperstein 2009). These studies suggest that observed race is more important than self-identification for understanding inequality outcomes because perceptions of others drive discrimination (Saperstein 2006; Telles and Murguia 1990). The association between Latinos' phenotype and outcomes such as employment, income, and education has also been studied (Arce, Murguia, and Frisbie 1987; Campbell 2009; Espino and Franz 2002; Frank, Akresh, and Lu 2010; Telles and Murguia 1990), but limited research has examined how self-identified Latinos' racial appearance relates to their behaviors or attitudes towards other racial groups.

Existing research has thus not considered that perceived race may not only relate to how one is accepted, but also to *how one accepts others*. For instance, if, among self-identified Latinos, those who are observed as White are more likely to accept Whites as dates than Latinos who are observed as non-White, it suggests that how outsiders view Latinos shapes their attitudes towards other groups, perhaps because greater acceptance by others *as* White leads to greater acceptance *of* Whites. On the other hand, if we find that observed race is not related to racial preferences, it suggests that self-identity alone adequately captures Latinos' view of their place in reference to other groups and thus their acceptance of other groups. Our study illustrates not only the inconsistencies between interviewer and self-assessments of race, but also considers whether examining observed race in addition to self-identification changes our understandings of Latinos' acceptance of other racial-ethnic groups in the domain of intimacy.

Racial Preferences in Dating as an Indicator of Assimilation

In contrast to more conventional approaches, this study adds to a growing body of research that analyzes racial preference data from internet daters to assess the salience of group boundaries (Feliciano, Lee, and Robnett 2011; Feliciano, Robnett, and Komaie 2009; Hitsch, Hortaçsu, and Ariely 2010; Robnett and Feliciano 2011; Sautter, Tippet, and Morgan 2010; Skopek, Schulz, and Blossfeld 2011; Wilson, McIntosh, and Insana II 2007; Yancey 2007; Yancey 2009). Dating is an increasingly important arena where race relations are played out. While intermarriage remains an important barometer of racial boundaries and assimilation (Qian and Lichter 2007), its importance may be diminishing since men and women are marrying later in life and an increasing proportion of adults spend more of their lives single (Schoen and Standish 2001). Individuals may be much more willing to interracially date than they are to interracially marry (Blackwell and Lichter 2004; Fujino 1997; Joyner and Kao 2005), but interracial marriage or cohabitation cannot occur if individuals are closed to the possibility of dating outside of their own racial group.

Moreover, the most common approaches to understanding racial boundaries in the United States—analyses of intermarriage data and surveys of racial attitudes—have limitations. First, marriage (and dating or cohabitation) outcomes are limited because they do not reveal the factors driving interracial pairings in the first place. Romantic relationships are shaped by both preferences and opportunities. The distinction between preferences and opportunities is important for understanding racial boundaries because, historically, descendants of European immigrants intermarried once they moved out of ethnic neighborhoods and into mainstream institutions (i.e. once opportunities increased) (Alba 1981). On the other hand, even with

increased education and integration, Blacks have low intermarriage rates, suggesting that preferences (on the part of Whites, Blacks, or Others) drive their relatively low intermarriage rates (Feliciano 2001; Qian and Lichter 2007). However, intermarriage data themselves cannot distinguish preferences from opportunities, nor reveal whose preferences drive marriage patterns.

Second, surveys about attitudes towards other racial groups and race-based policies, or acceptance of other racial groups in various realms (i.e. social distance scales – see (Bogardus 1928) are usually based on hypothetical scenarios (such as questions about whether one would oppose their child marrying someone of another race) (Herring and Amissah 1997; Yancey 2003). Respondents have been found to appear more racially tolerant in abstract survey questions than in in-depth interviews (Bonilla-Silva and Forman 2000). Respondents may mask their true views in both interviews and surveys, understanding that in post-civil rights U.S. society, it is no longer socially acceptable to express racial biases (Bonilla-Silva and Baiocchi 2001; Gallagher 2008). Examining the acceptance of various racial groups among people in a real-life dating situation free from opportunity constraints overcomes these limitations and thus offers a unique perspective on the salience of racial boundaries.

Racial Appearance and Assimilation among Latinos

Because they feed into marriage and childbearing outcomes, Latinos' racial dating choices provide one indication of assimilation trajectories; if enough intermixing of families occurs, existing "groups" will no longer be socially meaningful (Gordon 1964). Theoretically, racial appearance is an important factor related to assimilation patterns. The classic view of assimilation is based on the experiences of European immigrants and their descendents: assimilation unfolds over generations, and eventually enough intermarriage with the dominant group occurs that group boundaries cease to be meaningful and any ethnic distinctions that

remain are only symbolic (Alba 1990; Gans 1979; Gordon 1964; Waters 1990). Some argue that this process is occurring for Latinos (Warren and Twine 1997; Yancey 2003). While not often emphasized, early scholars noted that the pace of assimilation was slower for darker-skinned ethnic groups, such as Greeks and Italians (Warner and Srole 1945).

Scholars suggest that the considerable diversity *within* the Latino category will mean that different assimilation patterns could apply to different segments of Latinos (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Feliciano 2001; Murgia and Forman 2003; Qian and Cobas 2004), and even different segments within the same national-origin group (Murgia and Forman 2003; Rumbaut 2009; Telles and Ortiz 2008). Phenotype has been suggested as one major source of diversity among Latinos that can lead to divergent assimilation trajectories (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Forman, Goar, and Lewis 2002). Given the diversity of skin tones and phenotypes among Latinos, assimilation into the dominant group may occur quickly for some lighter-skinned Latinos, and slower or not at all for others (Feliciano, Lee, and Robnett 2011; Frank, Akresh, and Lu 2010).

Segmented assimilation theory posits that contemporary immigrants and their children may not assimilate according to the classic pattern due to many vulnerabilities, particularly their racial visibility (Portes and Zhou 1993). Portes and Zhou (1993) argue that European immigrants' "skin color reduced a major barrier to entry into the American mainstream," an advantage that most children of immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean do not have (76). Therefore, segmented assimilation theory proposes two alternative paths for non-White immigrant groups: "selective assimilation," in which these groups retain their own unique ethnic/racial identities, or "downward assimilation," in which assimilation is "into the underclass" (Portes and Zhou 1993: 82). Latinos who are visibly non-White might exhibit either

pattern, depending upon factors such as their ethnic community's resources or level of exposure to and identification with disadvantaged native-born minority groups.

The emphasis in aforementioned research has most often been on racial visibility as a barrier to assimilation because of discrimination and negative treatment by others (Arce, Murguia, and Frisbie 1987; Bonilla-Silva 2004; Telles and Murguia 1990). Scholars have focused less on how members of ethnic groups themselves contribute to the assimilation process and how their attitudes and behaviors vary by racial appearance. A few studies have considered how skin color affects racial self-identification, finding that darker-skinned Latinos are more likely identify as "other" or "Black" and less likely to identify as "White" (Frank, Akresh, and Lu 2010; Golash-Boza and Darity 2008). These self-identifications indicate that only some Latinos are pursuing entry into the White racial group through their self-identification choices, although these choices are also partly shaped by whether Latinos are accepted or discriminated against by the dominant group (Frank, Akresh, and Lu 2010; Golash-Boza 2006). Murgia and Forman's (2003) attitudinal study found that Mexican-Americans with lighter skin expressed more warmth towards Whites than those with darker skin, but found no relation between skin color and warmth towards Blacks. Research has also shown that Latinos who identify as non-White are less likely to marry non-Latino Whites (Qian and Cobas 2004). To the extent that racial self-identity on the census corresponds somewhat to racial appearance, this suggests that marriage choices are constrained by racial appearance and/or that racial appearance relates to mating preferences for particular racial groups. The current study moves beyond these inquiries to consider the agency of self-identified Latinos in the assimilation process more directly by examining whether their perceived race affects their acceptance of other racial groups in a real-life dating situation.

Racial Classifications, Observed Race and Racial Preferences

Why would outsiders' racial classifications of self-identified Latinos relate to their racial preferences in dating? Posing this question suggests that self-identification as "Latino" or "Hispanic" masks the lived experiences of those who may appear phenotypically black or white. Indeed, recent research calls into question the notion Latinos are currently a meaningful group at all given the diversity subsumed under the term (Feliciano, Lee, and Robnett 2011; Frank, Akresh, and Lu 2010). There is considerable variation in the way Latinos self-identify, the way they are treated by others, and their socioeconomic outcomes. For example, descendants of Latin Americans in the U.S. do not collectively accept a pan-ethnic Latino or Hispanic identity, often choosing instead to emphasize their unique national origins (Oboler 1992).

The findings of this study have implications for the measurement of Latino populations in the United States. Most surveys, as well as the Census, rely only on self-identifications of race, but our research suggests that outsider classification captures a dimension of race that is distinct from self-identification and is independently associated with different outcomes. The Census Bureaus' current method of separately assessing self-identified race and self-identified Hispanic origin, despite claims that it measures differences by perceived race (Patterson 2001), may inadequately capture the different dimensions of race relevant to understanding the lived experiences of the Hispanic origin population. Our findings illustrate that, not only do outsider classifications of race often not correspond to self-identifications, the two dimensions of race may yield different pictures of Latinos' acceptance of other racial groups as dates.

Outsiders' racial classifications of Latinos may drive their options in the dating market. A White racial phenotype may be considered a form of capital in dating situations. Exchange theory in mate selection posits that lower status individuals trade their capital, whether it be

economic, human, or physical, for a higher status mate (Davis 1941; Fu 2001; Gullickson 2006; Merton 1941). Given that Whites have historically ranked highest on the racial hierarchy in the United States and Blacks the lowest, it follows that Latinos who have physical capital in the form of a White phenotype might trade on that capital for a higher racial status mate (White). From the opposite perspective, Latinos without such physical capital would marry lower racial status mates (Blacks). Intermarriage data provide some preliminary evidence for such exchanges as Latinos who identify as non-White are less likely to marry non-Latino Whites (Qian and Cobas 2004). Studies show that Latino ethnic groups that tend to have more African ancestry, such as Puerto Ricans, have higher intermarriage rates with Blacks than others (Fu 2007), and Puerto Ricans who self-identify as non-White are more likely to marry Blacks than Whites (Batson, Qian, and Lichter 2006). Exchange theory would predict that, recognizing their options, Latinos who are perceived as White would be more likely to include Whites as possible dates while Latinos who are perceived as Black would be more likely to include Blacks as possible dates.

Another reason why outsider's racial classifications may influence dating choices is that phenotype is often considered a marker of ethnic legitimacy (Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001; Hunter 2007; Hunter 2005; Jimenez 2004; Jiménez 2010). Among Latinos, studies have shown that those with lighter skin, who report being able to "pass" as White, often feel less authentic than their darker-skinned counterparts who look more stereotypically Latino[1] (Hunter 2007; Hunter 2005; Jimenez 2004). For example, the light-skinned Mexican-American women in Hunter's (2005) study report facing the scrutiny of co-ethnics who consider them less authentically Chicana or Mexican. Thus, for some light-skinned Latinos, *intra-ethnic* boundaries may be more difficult to negotiate than *inter-ethnic* boundaries (Jiménez 2010). To avoid claims

[1] Experimental research has shown that, with considerable agreement, subjects do identify a prototypical "Latino" appearance (Wilkins, Kaiser, and Rieck 2010).

of ethnic illegitimacy, Latinos who appear White may feel more comfortable dating non-Latino Whites.

In addition, research on African-Americans has shown that the lighter-skinned tend to exhibit less pride in and identify less with their ethnic heritage (Brown, Ward, Lightbourn, and Jackson 1998; Freeman, Armor, Ross, and Pettigrew 1966; Wilkins, Kaiser, and Rieck 2010). Among Latinos, the lighter-skinned are more likely to identify as racially "White" as opposed to their darker-skinned counterparts who more often identify racially as "Other" or "Black" (Golash-Boza and Darity 2008). Thus, lighter-skinned Latinos who appear phenotypically White may exhibit less ethnic pride and thus be less concerned about ethnic homogamy.

On the other hand, darker-skinned Latinos are more likely to report having experienced discrimination (Jiménez 2010; Telles and Ortiz 2008). Jiménez (2008; 2010) argues that due to sustained immigration, many Mexican-Americans are mistaken for foreign-born Latinos based on their physical appearance. Experiencing nativism and discrimination reinforces the salience of a Mexican-origin identity and sharpens inter-ethnic boundaries between Whites and people of Mexican descent (Jimenez 2008). This suggests that those Latinos who exhibit a more stereotypical Latino appearance may be more likely to exclude Whites as possible dates because of such negative experiences.

Thus, drawing on research on intra- and inter-ethnic boundaries and identity, segmented assimilation theory, and exchange theory, this study considers several research questions: First, do racial preferences among self-identified Latinos vary by their observed race? If so, how do they vary? Are self-identified Latinos who are also seen as Latino by others more likely than those who are viewed as non-Latino to prefer to prefer endogamy in dating? Are self-identified Latinos who are classified by outsiders as Black more similar to self-identified Blacks in their

racial preferences in dating than other Latinos are? Similarly, are self-identified Latinos who are perceived as White more similar to self-identified Whites in their racial preferences in dating than other Latinos are?

Data and Methods

We collected data between September 2004 and May 2005 from internet dating profiles posted on Yahoo Personals, which was then the most popular national online dating website (Madden and Lenhart 2006). At the time of data collection, posting dating profiles on Yahoo Personals was free. On their profiles, daters filled out a checklist of demographic information about themselves, such as age, sex, educational level and ethnicity. Daters selected 1 of 10 choices in response to the question, "my ethnicity is mostly…" The options included Black/African-American, Asian, Caucasian/White, East Indian, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern, Native-American, Pacific Islander, Inter-racial or Other. Daters could only designate one ethnicity option, or they could refuse to answer (I"ll tell you later"). Choices could not be ranked.

We selected profiles from people who self-identified as Black, White, Asian, and Latino[2] living within 50 miles of four major U.S. cities: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Atlanta. We chose these cities because they vary by region (West, Northeast, Midwest, and South), historical and contemporary racial politics, racial compositions, group sizes, and national origin groups represented. The racial composition of these cities varies such that Latinos make up 9% in Atlanta, 19% in Chicago, 22% in New York, and 44% in Los Angeles (Based on authors' calculations of the 2005 Community Survey). Each of the four metropolitan areas has different immigration histories, and thus differs markedly in the national origin make-up of their Latino

[2] We also collected a random sample of Yahoo internet dating profiles from the four metropolitan areas. This data showed that self-identified Whites, Blacks, Asians, and Latinos accounted for 93% of all daters. Only 1.5%of the daters in the random sample did not state their race/ethnicity.

populations. Mexicans, both historically and currently, are the dominant ethnic group in Los Angeles, although Central Americans are also represented in sizable numbers. Only recently have Latinos including Mexicans, Carribeans, and Central Americans immigrated to Atlanta. In Chicago, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans predominate. Both Dominicans and Puerto Ricans are far more likely to reside in N.Y. as over one-half (53.8%) of Dominicans and 23% of Puerto Ricans reside there and in the immediate surrounding area (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, and Albert 2011). Racial identities also vary such that Dominicans and Puerto Ricans are far more likely to self-identify as Black or African American (12.9% and 8.7% respectively) than other Latino ethnic groups such as Guatemalans (1.1%) or Mexicans (.9%) (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, and Albert 2011). Because racial identities correspond to some degree to racial classification by others, we expect our sample of Latinos who are classified as Black to be overrepresented by New Yorkers.

Because we view racial preferences as inputs into eventual marriage and childbearing outcomes, we limited the sample to those ages 18-50, who were only seeking heterosexual dates. We selected 200 profiles for each race/gender combination in each metropolitan area, for a total sample size of more than 6000.[3]

We coded all the demographic information about the person who posted the profile (age, sex, race, education, occupation, etc, and information about the characteristics they seek in a date (age, body type, education, race, etc.). Daters stated preferences for up to 19 particular

[3] 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 combination in each city, we sorted profiles by how recently they were posted or edited; we then selected the first 200 profiles that appeared within each race/gender/city. We wanted to eliminate any potential for 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. We aimed for a sample size of 6,400 in order to allow for robust statistical tests of differences across three strata: gender, race, and metropolitan area. The sample size is smaller than our targeted sample size because there were fewer than 200 Latina and Asian male profiles posted in Atlanta, and we eliminated all duplicate profiles.

characteristics, including ethnicity, or left the default as "any," to indicate that they had no preference.

Data Considerations

Although internet use has expanded exponentially in recent years, internet users are still a select sample, and this is especially so among Blacks and Latinos (see Mack 2001; Jayajit and Bosman 2005). For example, around the time of our data collection, 70 percent of Whites used the internet, compared to only 57 percent of Blacks (Fox 2005). Internet use among Latinos varies by language: internet use among English-dominant or bilingual Latinos is similar to Whites, but only 33 percent of Spanish-dominant Latinos use the internet (Fox 2005). However, the most inequality in internet use is found by socio-economic status; those with the lowest income and education levels are far less likely to go online across and within all racial/ethnic groups (Martin and Robinson 2007). Thus, our data cannot be generalized beyond the population of U.S. internet users, who have higher socio-economic status than the general U.S. population. The sample of Blacks and Latinos is even more selective than the sample of Whites and Asians in this regard, and the sample of Latinos also underrepresents recent immigrants.

In addition, although internet dating has become, by most accounts, a mainstream practice in recent years (Sautter et al. 2010), internet daters may still be a select group of single internet users. However, recent survey research suggests that internet daters do not differ in socio-economic or demographic characteristics (such as gender, race or education) from single internet users who do not use internet dating services (Sautter et al. 2010). The strongest determinants of internet dating among single internet users were whether respondents were actively looking for a partner and whether they knew someone who had tried online dating

(Sautter et al. 2010). Thus, our data are fairly representative of single internet users in these U.S. metropolitan areas, who tend to be more educated and skilled in writing in English.

A further sample selection issue was the possibility of self-selecting minorities who are especially open to interracial dating. This might be the case if Yahoo Personals were dominated by Whites; minority daters also have the option to use ethnic-specific websites. However, Whites were actually underrepresented on the website compared to their representation among internet users in all the regions except for Los Angeles (where their representation approximates the percentage of internet users).[4] In general, the racial distribution of internet daters on Yahoo Personals closely approximates the racial distribution of internet users in the four metropolitan areas (information available upon request). Thus, we have little reason to expect that the racial makeup of the Yahoo dating pool would affect racial preferences any more than racial preferences are shaped by the racial makeup of the communities in which the daters live, a factor we include in our analysis.

We also consider the possibility that internet daters might be especially choosy about who they date (and thus unable to find their preferred dates off-line). We account for this by examining differences in racial exclusion and inclusion *controlling* for how choosy the dater is in general.

Unfortunately, the website does not distinguish between those who are looking for a serious relationship, versus those who are seeking only a casual relationship. Given prior research, which shows that interracial relationships are less likely than same-race relationships to lead to marriage (Joyner and Kao 2005), our results do not necessarily represent willingness to engage in serious interracial relationships. However, willingness to even casually date someone

[4] Using a random sample of Yahoo internet daters, we compared their racial makeup to a sample of internet users in each region using the 2003 CPS School Enrollment and Computer Use Supplement.

of another racial group indicates a certain level of social acceptance and is necessary for a more serious relationship to develop.

We were also concerned that there might be some misrepresentation in daters' stated preferences. However, if online daters do misrepresent racial preferences, they are likely to do so in the direction of *including* racial groups whom, in reality, they are not open to dating. Prior research examining actual online contact on a dating Website shows that daters who do *not* state any racial preferences in their profiles nevertheless tend to discriminate against members of different racial groups (Hitsch, Hortaçsu, and Ariely 2010). Also, preferring "any" racial group is the default on the website; daters who are in a rush to complete a profile may choose to disregard the choices. Others may wish to appear politically correct. For these reasons, we make an analytical distinction between those who state they are open to dating "any" racial group and those who stated particular choices and excluded particular groups. Given that these are real individuals searching for a date, daters would have no reason to *exclude* groups that they are actually open to dating, and thus we are confident that the patterns we find accurately represent true preferences, even if they underestimate the degree to which particular racial groups are actually excluded.

Despite their limitations, the data hold a number of advantages. Even if not representative of the general population, internet dating pools are not trivial: approximately 16 million Americans use such services; nearly three-quarters of all internet users who are single and looking for romantic partners have used the internet to find dates and Yahoo Personals had more than 6 million unique visitors each month (Madden and Lenhart 2006). Most importantly, these data provide a rare opportunity to examine how people behave in a real-life situation, unlike attitudinal surveys or social distance scales based on hypothetical scenarios. Further, in contrast

to marriage and dating *outcomes* (Harris and Ono 2005), stated racial preferences are not necessarily limited by physical proximity. On the internet, individuals are free to include as possible dates groups they might not normally come into contact with in their everyday lives. Therefore, stated racial choices in an actual search for a date may be a better indicator of the social distance between groups than dating/marriage outcomes or survey findings.

Measurement of Observed Race

Our key independent variable is the observed race of the Latino daters. Because the way outsiders categorize others by race may vary by the observer's own characteristics, especially their own racial background (Harris 2002), three research assistants from different racial backgrounds independently assessed the daters' race based on their photographs.[5] The coders were provided copies of the self-identified Latino daters' profiles and instructed to code the racial category that best described the dater, based solely on his/her appearance in the photograph. The racial categories the coders could choose from were White/Caucasian, Black/African-American, Asian, Latino/Hispanic[6] or Other. The coders were not told that these daters self-identified as Latino and were explicitly instructed *not* to look at any parts of the profile except for the photograph.[7] We note that while many previous studies only examine phenotypic dimensions of race (i.e. skin color), the observers here may have relied on self-presentations of cultural identities as well (as expressed through clothing, hairstyle, etc…). Thus, our study captures how observers categorize others based on both physical and cultural aspects

[5] The three assistants included a Black female student from greater Los Angeles, a Latina female student from greater San Francisco, and a White female student from New York City.

[6] Although there is debate about whether Latinos are considered a racial or ethnic category, we follow Roth (2010) in referring to Latinos as a racial category because non-Hispanic Whites recognize a phenotypic "Hispanic" racial type (characterized by brown skin and a mix of European, indigenous, and/or African features). None of the coders expressed confusion or questioned whether Latino/Hispanic was a valid racial category.

[7] Because the coders completed the coding in a very short amount of time, we believe that, for the most part, they followed the instructions and did not look at the information on the profiles. However, we cannot rule out the possibility that one or more of the coders did consult the text of the profiles on occasion. If so, this would bias the coding in the direction of more daters being categorized as Latino, consistent with the daters' own self-identity.

of appearance.[8]

Agreement between any two coders ranged from 68-74%.[9] In cases of disagreement, if two coders agreed, we used that racial category as the observed race. If all three raters disagreed (4.5% of all cases), we recoded the dater's observed race into a residual "ambiguous" category, which was then collapsed into the "other" category. Figure 1 shows the coders' assessments of the observed race of the self-identified Latino sample. We see that nearly 75% of the Latinos were observed as "Latino" in appearance, while 14% were perceived as "White," 7% as "Black" and 7% as Other/ambiguous.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Other Independent Variables

We coded all the demographic information about the dater who posted the profile. As control variables, we include gender, age (daters average around 33 years old), education (coded as high school graduate or less, some college, college graduate, or post-graduate), political views (coded as liberal or very liberal vs. middle of the road, conservative or not political), religion (Christian, not religious, other, or no answer), Spanish language knowledge (speaks Spanish, does not speak Spanish, and no answer), and body type (slim/slender/average, thick/a few extra pounds/voluptuous, and no answer).

[8] Racial classification may also be affected by social status cues. Previous research has shown that observers are more likely to categorize individuals as White if they are dressed in a business suit, and Black if dressed in a janitor's uniform Freeman, Jonathan B., Andrew M. Penner, Aliya Saperstein, Matthias Scheutz, and Nalini Ambady. 2011. "Looking the Part: Social Status Cues Shape Race Perception." *PLoS ONE* 6:e25107.. Thus the racial categorizations here may also be based on implicit associations between social status and race to the extent that status is indicated in a photograph.

[9] The Black and Latina students agreed on the most racial categorizations (74%), while the Black and White students agreed the least (68%). The substantive results did not change if any one coder's assessments were used, but combining all three explained slightly more variance. Given that these were categorical codings, we could not calculate an overall inter-rater reliability score for each outcome, but the mean inter-rater reliability score of.76 indicates that there is considerable overlap in these three observers' perceptions of race. The coders were in the most agreement about who was Black, and the least agreement about who was "other" or Asian. Interestingly, the White coder perceived more of the daters to be White, while the Latina coder perceived more of the daters to be Latino.

We also coded information about the characteristics online daters were seeking in a date. In addition to race, daters could express a preference for nineteen other possible characteristics in a potential date, such as age, educational attainment, religion, body type, or language, or leave the default as "any," to indicate that they have no preference.[10] We control for whether the dater stated a preference for educational attainment, religion, body type, or language. We also created a control variable measuring how selective the dater was about their date's characteristics overall, based on the percentage of these 19 other items for which the dater expressed a preference.

In addition, we collected data on the racial composition of the community that each dater reported as their residence on their profiles. Using data from the 2005 American Community Survey, we collected data on the percent non-Hispanic White, percent non-Hispanic Black, and percent Latino in each town/municipality.[11] These racial composition data indicate possible exposure to different racial groups in their communities.

Dependent Variables

We coded racial preferences into three sets of multinomial dependent variables. The default response on the website is to state "any" as the preference. If daters wish to state a racial preference, they can select one or more of 10 groups they might prefer to date by checking the

[10] Sixty-six percent of daters expressed preferences for particular racial/ethnic groups; this was the third most common characteristic daters expressed a preference for, following age (99%) and body type (77%).

[11] All daters entered their zipcode which was converted by the website to a town/city/municipality that was publicly viewed. Racial composition data for each municipality/town was obtained from the 2005 American Community Survey in several ways. First, we used a name search for each municipality/town and obtained the racial composition data based on the municipality/town name. If this did not yield any search results, we used an address in that particular municipality/town and obtained the racial composition data based on that address. When using an address search, the American Community Survey provides demographic characteristics based on several geographic areas: PUMA, School District, Congressional District, etc. Generally, the racial composition data was collected with the following preference: by PUMA and then by School District. We gave preference to results returned by PUMA because they represented a smaller geographic area. These data revealed that daters in our sample were dispersed throughout each metropolitan area, and did not primarily live within each central city. Thus, we found a wide range of racial compositions even within one metropolitan area. For example, in the Los Angeles area, 44% of the Latino daters lived in Los Angeles, but the rest were dispersed over 72 different towns/municipalities. These areas ranged from a low of 7% Latino (Studio City) to a high of 87% Latino (Pico Rivera).

corresponding boxes. Groups include Caucasian (White), African-American (Black), Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern, Native American, Pacific Islander, East Indian, Inter-racial, and Other. Daters chose more than four hundred unique combinations of racial groups as preferred dates. For example, one dater could indicate that their "match" could be Caucasion(White), Asian, or Hispanic/Latino, another could indicate that their "match" could be African/American(Black), Inter-racial, or Other, and another could indicate that their "match" could only be Hispanic/Latino. To simplify, we focus on three multinomial outcomes. First, we examine a preference for endogamy using a four category dependent variable: 1) includes own racial group *and* other groups; 2) includes own racial group *only;* 3) excludes own racial group/includes *only other* racial groups; and 4) no stated preference. Second, we examine acceptance of Whites using a three category outcome: 1) excludes Whites 2) includes Whites 3) no stated preference. Third, we similarly examine acceptance of Blacks: 1) excludes Blacks 2) includes Blacks 3) no stated preference.

Analytic Strategy

We begin by comparing the sample characteristics by both self-identified race and, for Latinos, observed race. Next, we present descriptive statistics of endogamy and exogamy preferences, followed by acceptance of Blacks and Whites as dates for the full sample, by race and observed race. To examine whether racial differences are significant once we control for sample characteristics, we next present results from multivariate analyses, focusing first on the Latino sample only and then comparing predicted probabilities of including Blacks and Whites as possible dates among all the racial groups.

Results

Sample Characteristics by Self-identified and Observed Race

Previous research has shown that online daters' racial preferences are influenced by characteristics other than their own race, such as education, body type, political views, religion, language, the racial composition of their communities, and preferences for other characteristics (Feliciano, Lee, and Robnett 2011; Feliciano, Robnett, and Komaie 2009; Wilson, McIntosh, and Insana II 2007; Yancey 2007; Yancey 2009). In this section, we examine whether these characteristics differ by self-identified or observed race; later, we consider whether such characteristics, rather than race alone, are driving patterns of dating choices.

Table 1 shows how various characteristics differ by self-identified race and, for self-identified Latinos, by observed race. First, we note that, by design, the dataset contains nearly equal numbers of men and women. However, when Latinos are disaggregated by observed race, we see that coders were more likely to view self-identified Latino males as White and other/ambiguous, while more females were observed to be Black. Since all three coders were female, it is possible that this finding is driven by the gender of the coder. Future research is needed to test whether observers' gender affects whether they view the race of men and women differently. Here, this finding suggests the importance of conducting analyses that control for gender, particularly since previous research has shown that the racial preferences of men and women can be quite divergent (Feliciano, Robnett, and Komaie 2009; Robnett and Feliciano 2011; Wilson, McIntosh, and Insana II 2007).

By design, the data are also fairly evenly split by metropolitan area. However, Latinos in New York were less likely to be classified as White (14%) than those in Los Angeles, Chicago, or Atlanta. Of Latinos who were viewed as Black, 43% lived in New York, 39% lived in Atlanta, while far fewer lived in Chicago (14%) or Los Angeles (4%). As suggested earlier, these findings may be driven by the varying contexts of these four metropolitan areas. Puerto Ricans

and Dominicans represent the largest and second largest groups, respectively, of Latinos in New York; members of these groups also tend to have more African ancestry than other Latino groups, such as Mexicans who are the dominant group in Los Angeles and Chicago. Puerto Ricans in New York have historically lived in closer proximity to African-Americans (Massey 1985), and Atlanta is a majority African-American city (54%) (U.S. Census 2010). This suggests more opportunities for Latino-Black relationships in these cities and that more of the self-identified Latino daters in these cities may actually have one African-American parent. While our data do not allow us to identify these individuals, we do consider the racial composition of the daters' surrounding community. Indeed, Table 1 shows that Latinos who are observed as White, Latino or Other tend to live in communities with lower percentages of non-Hispanic Blacks (22-23%) than Whites do (26%). In contrast, the average percentage of non-Hispanic Blacks in the communities of Latinos who are perceived as Black (30%) is similar to that of self-identified Blacks (32%). Likewise, the average percentage of non-Hispanic Whites in the communities of Latinos' who are seen as White (41%) is similar to that of self-identified Whites (39%). Differences in observed race by metropolitan area and community racial composition suggest the importance of considering whether these factors are driving any differences by observed race in racial preferences, an analysis we discuss later.

Education varies by self-identified race in expected ways: White and Asian daters are much more likely to have college degrees than Blacks or Latinos. Among Latinos, we see that those who are observed as White are more likely to have college and graduate degrees, especially compared with those who are classified as Black or Latino. Conversely, 19% of self-identified Latinos who are perceived as Black have only a high school education or less compared with 8% of those perceived as White. These educational differences could be the result of at least two

different processes. First, Latinos who are perceived as White may benefit from the symbolic capital of Whiteness in their schooling experiences, while those perceived as Black, like African-Americans, may face negative teacher perceptions and expectations that negatively impact their educational attainment (Downey and Pribesh 2004). Second, lighter-skinned Latinos may be more likely to come from highly educated families; in most Latin American countries, lighter-skin is associated with higher class status (Bonilla-Silva 2004). Thus, Latinos who appear White may have inherited class advantages even prior to migration, while those who appear Black may have inherited class disadvantages. Regardless of the reason, these educational differences suggest that we must consider whether any differences in racial preferences by perceived race among Latinos are related to their educational backgrounds or educational preferences.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Only a few differences in other characteristics are notable. In terms of body type, we see that Black and Latino internet daters are more likely to describe themselves as having a larger body type than Asians or Whites. However, we see significant variation among Latinos by observed race, with those who are observed as White more likely to have thinner body types (87%), especially compared with Latinos classified as Black (71%). Self-identified Latinos and Blacks are also more likely to be religious than Whites and Asians. Further, "Black" Latinos (self-identified Latinos who others perceive as Black) are nearly twice as likely to be of a religion other than Christian/Catholic[12] (17%) compared with "White" Latinos (6%), "Latino" Latinos (9%) and other/ambiguous Latinos (7%). Over half of all Latino daters report speaking Spanish, with few differences by observed race. In terms of how choosy daters are about their dates' characteristics, we see few differences by race; "Black" Latinos do express more

[12] The "other" religions could not be identified from the data. The website included Buddhist/Taoist, Jewish and Muslim as other options, but all of these "Black" Latinos chose the residual "other" religious category.

preferences, particularly for height, but this is likely explained by the higher proportion of women in this category.

Before turning to multivariate analyses that consider how variation in these characteristics may shape racial differences in racial preferences in dating, we turn to descriptive analyses of our dependent variables.

Endogamy and Exogamy Preferences by Self-identified and Observed Race

Table 2 shows the in-group and out-group preferences of Yahoo daters, comparing self-identified Whites, Blacks, and Asians and Latinos, and comparing the preferences of self-identified Latinos by observed race. We see that Latinos in general (and Asians) are far less likely to prefer endogamy than either Whites or Blacks; 10% of all self-identified Latinos prefer to date only other Latinos compared to 31% of Whites and 24% of Blacks who prefer to date only Whites and Blacks, respectively ($p<.001$).

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Differences in endogamy/exogamy preferences among Latinos by observed race are less pronounced than those between all self-identified Latinos and Blacks or Whites. Nonetheless, there is some support for the idea that self-identified Latinos who appear Latino are more likely to prefer endogamy as compared to those who appear Black or White. Latinos whom outsiders categorize as Latino are slightly more likely to prefer to only date other Latinos (11%) compared with those who are observed White (9%) ($p<.05$), Black (6%) ($p<.05$), or other (9%) (ns). Moreover, Latinos who are categorized as White (10%) or Black (12%) are more likely than those categorized as Latino or other (6%) to prefer to *only* date *non*-Latinos ($p<.05$).

We explored these differences further by examining which racial groups Latinos who exclude other Latinos as possible dates (n=111) *do* prefer to date, and found starkly divergent

patterns by observed race (not shown). For example, among those self-identified Latinos perceived as White and who do not include other Latinos as possible dates, 91% accept Whites as dates, compared to only 75% of those whom observers classify as Latino ($p<.10$), and only 18% of those who are perceived as Black ($p<.001$). We found the opposite pattern when we examined acceptance of Blacks among Latinos who prefer to only date non-Latinos. Here, only 14% of "White" Latinos and 20% of "Latino" Latinos include Blacks, compared to 73% of Latinos classified as Black ($p<.001$).

Acceptance of Blacks and Whites by Self-identified and Observed Race

As suggested by the above findings, differences among self-identified Latinos by observed race are the most divergent if we compare their preferences for Blacks or Whites. Table 3 makes these comparisons, as well as comparisons between self-identified Whites, Blacks, Asians and Latinos.

Table 3 shows that when self-identified Latinos are considered as a whole, they tend to be more inclusive of Blacks as potential dates than Whites or Asians are. Although 50% of self-identified Latinos exclude Blacks, 14% explicitly include Blacks; this compares to more than 60% of self-identified Whites and Asians excluding Blacks and 5% and 4% including Blacks, respectively ($p<.001$). However, the degree of acceptance of Blacks as dates varies widely by Latinos' perceived race: about 50% of Latinos who are observed as Latino or Other exclude Blacks, while 54% of Latinos who are observed as White exclude Blacks, a percentage that is not statistically different from that of self-identified Whites. In contrast, Latinos whom observers classify as Black are the most inclusive of Blacks as possible dates – 41% explicitly include Blacks, although 27% still exclude Blacks. Thus, self-identified Latinos who appear White are more similar to self-identified Whites in their inclusion of Whites than Latinos who appear

Black, Latino, or Other are; on the other hand, self-identified Latinos who are perceived as Black are more similar to self-identified Blacks in their inclusion of Whites.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Table 3 also shows how preferences for Whites vary by self-identified race and observed race for Latinos. In comparing the acceptance of Blacks vs. Whites as dates, one important finding is that Latinos who are observed as White, Latino, or other, as well as self-identified Asians, much more often include Whites as possible dates than Blacks. For instance, 44% of observed Latinos include Whites while only 14% prefer Blacks. However, self-identified Latinos who are perceived as Black are similar to self-identified Blacks in that they are much more likely to accept Blacks (41%) than Whites (26%) as dates. "Black" Latinos, while still somewhat more likely to include Whites than self-identified Blacks do (26% vs. 17%), are much less likely to include Whites than "Latino" Latinos (44%) or "Other" Latinos (46%) do. In addition, we note that, other than self-identified Whites themselves, "White" Latinos are the group least likely to exclude Whites as possible dates (13% vs. 42% of "Black" Latinos, 21% of "Latino" Latinos and 15% of "Other" Latinos). These findings further support the idea that Latinos who are perceived as Black are more similar to self-identified Blacks in terms of their racial preferences in dating than Latinos who are perceived as White, Latino, or Other are, and that Latinos who are perceived as White are more similar to Whites in their racial preferences than Latinos perceived as Black, Latino, or Other are.

Multivariate Analyses of the Acceptance of Blacks and Whites as Dates

Table 4 considers whether differences in racial preferences among Latinos by observed race can be explained by other factors, such as gender[13], metropolitan area[14], education level,

[13] We tested whether differences in preferences for endogamy/exogamy or inclusion of Blacks/Whites by observed race among Latinos varied by gender and found no significant interaction effects. We did find significant gender

Spanish language knowledge, or the racial composition of their community. Findings show that these factors do not explain the differences we see by observed race. Net of all of these and other factors, self-identified Latinos who are classified by others as Black are five times as likely as those who are classified as Latino to include Blacks as dates, but far less likely to include Whites. Latinos whose observed race is White are about half as likely to include Blacks and over one and a half times as likely to include Whites as compared with self-identified Latinos whose observed race is Latino. Thus, differences among Latinos by observed race are significant and not explained by other factors.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Figure 2 shows predicted probabilities from multivariate analyses comparing Latinos' preferences for Whites and Blacks to those of self-identified Blacks, Whites and Asians. The full models on which this figure is based are shown in Appendix Tables 1 and 2. First, in comparing the inclusion of Blacks vs. the inclusion of Whites, self-identified Latinos who are observed as White, self-identified Latinos observed as Latino, self-identified Whites, and self-identified Asians all are far more likely to accept Whites than Blacks as possible dates, net of other factors. For example, the models predict that the probability of "Latino" Latinos preferring Whites is .46 compared to a predicted probability of only .15 preferring Blacks. However, we see the opposite pattern for self-identified Blacks and Latinos who are observed as Black: these groups prefer Blacks more than Whites. Among Latinos whom outsiders view as Black, the predicted probability of preferring Blacks is .39 compared to .23 preferring Whites.

INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

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differences by self-identified race that are consistent with previous research (Robnett and Feliciano 2011). However, since differences by our key independent variable, observed race, do not vary by gender we consider an analysis of gender differences to be beyond the scope of this paper.

[14] We tested whether differences in preferences for endogamy/exogamy or inclusion of Blacks/Whites by observed race among Latinos varied by metropolitan area and found no significant interaction effects.

Although at first glance these patterns might indicate a simple mirroring of Whites' preferences among Latinos with non-Black appearance or a simple mirroring of Blacks' preferences among Latinos with Black appearance, the reality is somewhat more complex. First, even self-identified Latinos who are perceived as White are significantly more likely to prefer Blacks (.09) than self-identified Whites are (.05) ($p<.05$) (although the majority of "White" Latinos still exclude Blacks). Thus, unlike Asians, who are slightly less likely than Whites to include Blacks as dates, self-identified Latinos of all racial phenotypes are more open to Blacks as dates than Whites are. Although "Black" Latinos are much more likely to accept Blacks as dates than Whites, less than half explicitly include Blacks (.39), and the predicted probability of excluding Blacks remains somewhat high (.27- not shown). Nevertheless, the disparity between Latinos who appear Black and Latinos who appear White or Latino is striking in the former's greater acceptance of Blacks and greater exclusion of Whites. Moreover, Latinos who are perceived as Black do not significantly differ from self-identified Blacks in their likelihood of including Whites as possible dates.

Overall, the key finding emerging from these analyses is that self-identified Latinos exhibit dating choice patterns that are similar to those of the racial group they are viewed by others as belonging to. Thus, Latinos who appear White are more similar to Whites in their preferences for Whites and Blacks than are Latinos who are perceived as Latino, Black, or Other. "White" Latinos are more likely to prefer Whites than "Latino" Latinos, and especially "Black" Latinos are. Conversely, Latinos whose observed race is Black are more similar to self-identified Blacks in their racial preferences than are Latinos who are perceived as Latino, White or Other. "Black" Latinos are more likely to prefer Blacks than "Latino" Latinos and especially "White" Latinos are. Nevertheless, these findings do not suggest that only observed race matters in

shaping dating choices since self-identified Latinos still differ in important ways from self-identified Whites or Blacks.

Discussion and Conclusion

The growing Latino population's place in the U.S. racial structure is complex and full of contradictions. By some media accounts, Latinos are clearly racialized as "others" who are "taking over" (Chavez 2008), yet in other accounts, Latinos are unequivocally accepted as part of the new mainstream (Guzman and Valdivia 2004). These contradictions are evident not only in popular culture and media, but in official contexts as well. For example, the U.S. Census simultaneously considers "Hispanic origin" individuals to be of any race, while at the same time presenting official statistics of Hispanics alongside "non-Hispanic" Whites, "non-Hispanic" Blacks, Native Americans, and Asians, suggesting Latinos are a fifth major racial group. This study illustrates that part of the complexity stems from the different dimensions to the race construct itself.

The Racial Classification Problem

Our findings inspire a rethinking of the measurements employed on most surveys that rely only on self-identifications of race. Our research shows that outsider classifications capture a dimension of race that is distinct from self-identification and is independently associated with different outcomes. The Census Bureau's current method of separately assessing self-identified race and self-identified Hispanic origin, despite claims that it measures differences by perceived race (Patterson 2001), inadequately captures the different dimensions of race relevant to understanding the lived experiences of the Hispanic origin population. Our data illustrate that, not only do outsider classifications of race often not correspond to self-identifications, the two dimensions of race yield different pictures of Latinos' acceptance of other racial groups as dates.

For example, our sample of self-identified Latinos overall were far more likely to accept Whites as possible dates than Blacks but were also much more accepting of Blacks as dates than self-identified Asians or Whites were. However, these patterns mask some important differences by observed race *among* self-identified Latinos. We found significant variation by observed race in terms of which racial groups (Whites or Blacks) Latinos were more likely to include as dates, and their degree of acceptance of Blacks and Whites. Thus, while it was the case that those classified by others as Latino or White were more likely to accept Whites than Blacks as dates, the reverse was the case among those classified as Black. Indeed, in terms of acceptance of Whites as dates, "Black" Latino daters were more similar to self-identified Blacks than to "White" Latinos or "Latino" Latinos. The greater acceptance of Blacks by self-identified Latinos than by Whites or Asians was also qualified since that acceptance was much greater among "Black" Latinos, followed by "Latino" Latinos, with "White" Latinos only slightly more likely to include Blacks than self-identified Whites did.

Relying on self-identification data as collected by the Census would mask such patterns. Not only has prior research shown that many self-identified Latinos do not identify with a particular racial category based on their physical appearance (Roth 2010), the outside observers in this study, consistent with the findings of previous research (Hitlin, Brown, and Elder 2007), viewed Latino or Hispanic *as* a valid racial category. Although our sample cannot be generalized to the entire U.S. population, our finding that coders perceived only 14% of self-identified Latinos to be White, while 53% of self-identified Latinos on the Census claimed a White racial identity, suggests that these two measures often do not correspond (Humes, Jones, and Ramirez 2011).

We argue that neither interviewer classifications nor self-identifications of race alone can adequately assess inter-racial relations through survey research, particularly for Latinos. For example, the patterns of racial inclusion revealed through this study suggest that intermarriage studies that rely on self-identification data alone likely *underestimate* the degree of intermarriage between Latinos who appear White and self-identified Whites, and *overestimate* the degree of intermarriage between Latinos who appear non-White and self-identified Whites. However, relying only on interviewer classification of race would also be misleading. Our results show, for instance, that self-identified Latinos who are classified by others as Black are far less likely than self-identified Blacks to include Blacks as possible dates, and self-identified Latinos who are classified as White are more likely than self-identified Whites to accept Blacks as dates.

Observed Race and Latinos' Assimilation Patterns

This study highlights Latinos' agency in the assimilation process by showing that observed race is associated with Latinos' acceptance of others in dating situations. Most existing research suggesting that racial appearance stratifies the assimilation trajectories of Latinos has tended to focus on socioeconomic outcomes, suggesting that discriminatory treatment by others is the key mechanism (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Hunter 2005; Telles and Murguia 1990). A few other studies have suggested that self-identification choices among Latinos indicate the pursuit of a particular assimilation trajectory (Frank, Akresh, and Lu 2010; Golash-Boza and Darity 2008). Here, we show how racial appearance relates to an actual behavior – stated acceptance of other racial groups as possible dates – that directly impacts mate selection and thus possibilities for intermarriage and marital assimilation. While the Latino daters in this study may be responding to discrimination or lack of acceptance by others with their dating choices, ultimately they are deciding to limit or expand their dating options to particular racial groups. Thus, for example,

Latinos who appear White to others choose to exclude Blacks and include Whites as possible dates at high rates, a decision that may lead to marriage with Whites and to their descendants' adoption of a White racial identity and categorization.

Our findings are consistent with theories suggesting that racial appearance is an important factor shaping Latinos' assimilation trajectories (Portes and Zhou 1993). It is among Latinos who are perceived as White that we are likely to see the most rapid assimilation into Whiteness take place (Yancey 2003). These Latinos include Whites and exclude Blacks as possible dates to a greater extent than those who are perceived as belonging to other racial groups. Among Latinos who are classified by others as Black, we see evidence of assimilating with Blacks or perhaps developing into a pan-minority group with Blacks (Carter 2005). These Latinos are distinct from those perceived as White or Latino and more similar to self-identified Blacks in that they are much more likely to include Blacks and exclude Whites as dates. Self-identified Latinos whom outsiders observe *as* Latino seem to fall into a "racial middle" (O'Brien 2008) as a racial group distinct from Whites or Blacks. While these Latinos tend to privilege Whites over other racial groups as acceptable dates, they fall in between "White" Latinos and "Black" Latinos in their levels of excluding Blacks as dates. "Latino" Latinos are also slightly more likely to prefer to only date other Latinos, lending support to the idea that the "racial middle" may persistent for some time, even though this group expresses strong preferences for Whites as dates. Thus, our findings support the view that assimilation processes vary because Latinos experience racialization differently (Golash-Boza 2006; Golash-Boza and Darity 2008). Some who identify as Latino are racialized as White, others are racialized as Black, while still others are racialized as a separate Latino group in the "racial middle" (O'Brien 2008).

The Mechanisms of Observed Race

Our findings are consistent with a number of existing theories offering mechanisms through which observed race relates to self-identified Latinos' dating choices. According to exchange theory (Davis 1941; Fu 2001; Merton 1941), self-identified Latinos who appear White are more likely to include Whites than other Latinos are because only they have the privilege of being able to exchange their physical capital for a White partner. In contrast, those who are classified as Latino or Black may recognize that their lower racial status constrains them such that they must be more accepting of lower status racial status groups in order to date. Self-identified Latinos' dating choices, according to this perspective, are driven by an acceptance of dominant racial hierarchies in the United States, in which Whites are afforded the highest status.

Another explanation for the link between observed race and racial preferences is through acceptance by co-ethnics: *intra-ethnic* boundaries may be particularly salient for Latinos who do not "appear" Latino and may be assumed to be less authentically Latino by their co-ethnics (Hunter 2007; Hunter 2005; Jiménez 2010); these Latinos may feel more comfortable dating the racial group they appear more similar to. The link may also be through the strength of ethnic identification, which may be weaker among lighter-skinned Latinos, as research suggests it is for light-skinned African-Americans (Brown, Ward, Lightbourn, and Jackson 1998; Wilkins, Kaiser, and Rieck 2010). Some Latinos may self-identify as Latino, but not feel strong attachments to this identity, and therefore be more open to dating non-Latinos.

Discrimination or lack of acceptance from other racial groups may also be a mechanism shaping racial choices in dating. Self-identified Latinos who are classified by outsiders as Black or Latino may be more likely than those who are seen as White to have experienced discrimination from Whites. Thus, these Latinos may be more likely to exclude Whites as possible dates as a reaction to negative experiences or because they realize they are unlikely to

be accepted by Whites. Such experiences may be particularly pronounced for Latinos who are perceived as Black, which might explain why their acceptance of Whites as dates is relatively low and mirrors that of self-identified Blacks.

The mechanisms driving Latino dating preferences as described by the above perspectives, are not mutually exclusive. All or some of these processes may be driving our results; future research is needed to delineate the social and psychological forces behind the patterns we find. Regardless of the reasons behind the associations between observed race and dating choices, the patterns have implications for the assimilation trajectories of different segments of the Latino population.

Future Research

This study suggests a number of directions for future research. To get a better picture of overall assimilation trajectories among the self-identified Latino population, a more representative sample is needed. Here, outsiders classified 72% of self-identified Latino daters as Latino, suggesting the majority of this population experiences racialization as a middle group. However, because of the select nature of the online dating sample, we cannot generalize about how outsiders would racially classify the general population of self-identified Latinos. Even though these internet daters had the option to choose “multiracial” or “other” as their race if they desired, some of the findings might be driven by multiracial Latinos. Although our findings approximate survey situations where respondents are given the option to self-identify as Latino and must identify with one category, data are needed that can assess whether patterns would differ if daters had the option to identify with more than one racial category. Our findings show that both self-identity and outsider classification of race clearly influence dating choices, but research that examines the racial appearance of self-identified Blacks and Whites is needed in

order to ascertain which dimension of race is more important in shaping dating preferences. Overall, the patterns here clearly show that observed race is an important source of heterogeneity within the self-identified Latino population that is associated with differential acceptance of other racial groups as dates. Thus, considering multiple dimensions of race better captures the complexity of how race is experienced by Latinos and how this relates to the pursuit of divergent assimilation trajectories.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics: Means and Percentagesby Race and, for Latinos, Observed Race (standard deviations for continuous variables in parentheses)

	Self-Identified Race				Observed Race of Latinos			
	White	Black	Asian	Latinos	Observed White	Observed Black	Observed Latino	Observed Other/ Ambiguous
Females	48.55	49.55	48.50	47.95	43.46	56.84	48.60	42.61
Males	51.45	50.45	51.50	52.05	56.54	43.16	51.40	57.39
Age	33.19	32.36	30.38	29.74	31.92	29.46	29.37	29.54
	(7.80)	(7.36)	(6.98)	(7.79)	(7.67)	(9.01)	(7.74)	(6.99)
Metropolitan Area:								
Los Angeles	23.76	24.68	26.93	26.02	27.57	4.21	27.87	23.48
New York	26.08	25.06	26.58	26.02	14.49	43.16	27.33	21.74
Chicago	25.11	25.71	27.00	25.37	27.10	13.68	25.79	26.96
Atlanta	25.05	24.55	19.49	22.58	30.84	38.95	19.00	27.83
Racial Composition of Municipality:								
Percentage of Non-Hispanic Blacks	26.47	32.07	21.30	22.72	23.42	30.42	21.93	22.81
	(18.47)	(20.38)	(16.82)	(17.25)	(18.15)	(33.34)	(16.87)	(17.47)
Percentage of Non-Hispanic Whites	38.74	32.33	39.93	37.06	40.72	33.34	36.25	40.43
	(14.90)	(14.69)	(17.75)	(18.97)	(19.13)	(20.21)	(18.79)	(17.96)
Education:								
High school or less	6.37	4.78	4.60	14.54	7.62	19.15	15.54	15.18
Some college	25.63	43.46	19.40	44.17	37.62	43.62	45.51	43.75
College graduate	45.42	37.94	49.28	31.64	43.81	31.91	29.68	27.68
Post graduate	22.58	13.82	26.72	9.65	10.95	5.32	9.27	13.39
Body type:								
Thick, voluptuous, large	8.41	27.91	5.01	22.12	11.21	29.47	23.98	17.39
Average, slim, athletic	90.82	71.12	92.62	75.86	87.38	70.53	73.85	79.13
No answer	0.77	0.97	2.37	2.02	1.40	0.00	2.17	3.48
Political views:								
Liberal or Very Liberal	21.77	21.12	16.91	17.11	19.16	16.84	16.65	17.39
Other	78.23	78.88	83.09	82.89	80.84	83.16	83.16	82.61
Religion								
Not religious	22.48	11.24	24.01	11.98	14.49	8.42	11.76	12.28
Christian/Catholic	54.59	60.79	38.07	61.00	62.15	63.16	60.18	65.79
Other	4.11	8.33	13.99	8.59	6.07	16.84	8.51	7.02
No answer	18.82	19.64	23.94	18.42	17.29	11.58	19.55	14.91
Spanish Language								
Speaks Spanish	7.64	5.30	6.19	58.85	58.41	60.00	59.37	52.63
Does not Speak Spanish	59.02	61.37	73.35	12.37	14.95	17.89	10.68	20.18
No answer	33.33	33.33	20.46	28.78	26.64	22.11	29.95	27.19
Preferences for Other Characteristics								
Choosiness (% of preferences)	40.48	42.69	41.94	40.90	40.01	45.98	40.81	39.04
	(21.05)	(22.22)	(21.11)	(22.06)	(21.34)	(21.97)	(22.25)	(21.14)
Preference for Religion	31.41	34.69	25.47	30.34	28.04	33.68	30.68	27.19
Preference for Body Type	80.35	76.29	77.11	75.26	76.17	82.11	75.11	67.54
Preference for Education	54.78	59.04	56.92	55.24	50.93	63.16	54.93	60
Preference for Height	64.87	66.93	66.04	64.09	59.81	75.79	63.98	63.48
N	1557	1548	1437	1537	214	95	1105	115

Table 2. Preferences for Endogamy and Exogamy by Self-Identified Race and, For Latinos, by Observed Race, Yahoo Internet Daters

	Self-Identified Race				Observed Race among Self-identified Latinos			
	White	Black	Asian	Latino	White	Black	Latino	Other
Prefers Own Only	31.41[LL]	23.51[LL]	8.91[LL]	10.27	8.88[LL]	6.32[LL]	11.04	8.77
Excludes Own	3.47	6.33	17.54	7.26	10.28	11.58	6.43	6.14
Prefers Own and Others	30.64	36.30	41.2[LL]	46.73	42.99[LL]	50.53	47.24	45.61
No Stated Preference	34.49	33.85	32.36	35.73	37.85	31.58	35.29	39.47
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Significantly different from Self-Id Whites Overall?	n/a	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Significantly different from Self-Id Blacks Overall?	***	n/a	***	***	***	***	***	***
Significantly different from Observed Latinos?	***	***	***	n/a	ns	ns	n/a	ns
N	1557	1548	1437	1528	214	95	1105	114

Notes: LLsignifies a difference from Latino-Observed Latino category significant at p<.05 level when compared to "excludes own" outcome;***p<.001

Table 3. Inclusion/Exclusion of Blacks and Whites by Self-Identified Race and, For Latinos, by Observed Race, Yahoo Internet Daters

	Self-Identified Race							Observed Race among Self-identified Latinos						
	White		Black		Asian		Latino		White		Black		Latino		Other	
No Stated Preference	34.49		33.85		32.36		35.73		37.85		31.58		35.29		39.47	
Excludes Blacks	60.31	LL***	6.33	W***, LL***	63.95	W*, LL***	49.87	W***	54.21	Wns, LL+	27.37	W***, LL***	50.95	W***	50.00	W*, LL
Includes Blacks	5.20		59.82		3.69		14.40		7.94		41.05		13.76		10.53	
Excludes Whites	3.47	B***, LL***	49.42	LL***	15.31	B***, LL***	20.81	B***	12.62	B***, LL*	42.11	B*, LL***	21.18	B***	14.91	B***, LLns
Includes Whites	62.04		16.73		52.33		43.46		49.53		26.32		43.53		45.61	
N	1557		1548		1437		1528		214		95		1105		114	

Notes: LL=significance test relative to observed Latinos, W=significance test relative to self-id Whites, B=significance test relative to self-id Blacks,

^{ns}p>.10, +p < .10, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 4. Relative Risk Ratios from Multinomial Regressions of Excluding or Including Whites and Blacks among Self-identified Latinos (n=1528)

	Includes Blacks vs. Excludes Blacks		Includes Whites vs. Excludes Whites	
Observed Race:				
Black	5.09	***	0.27	***
White	0.60	+	1.61	*
Other	0.77		1.31	
(reference = Latino)				

Notes: +p < .10 *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001; No stated preference vs. excludes outcome not shown

Models control for gender, age, metropolitan area, education, body type, religion, spanish language, choosiness, preference for religion, body type, education & height, and racial composition of municipality

Figure 1. Observed Race of Self-Identified Latinos, Yahoo Internet Daters, N=1528

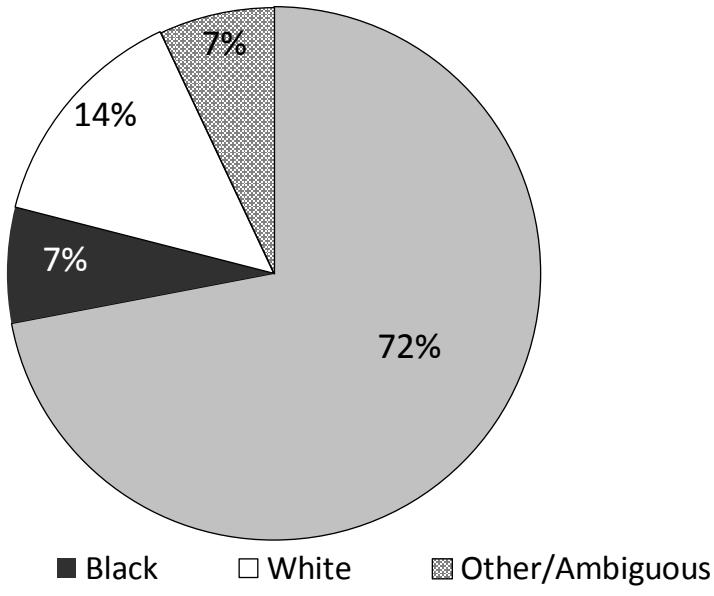
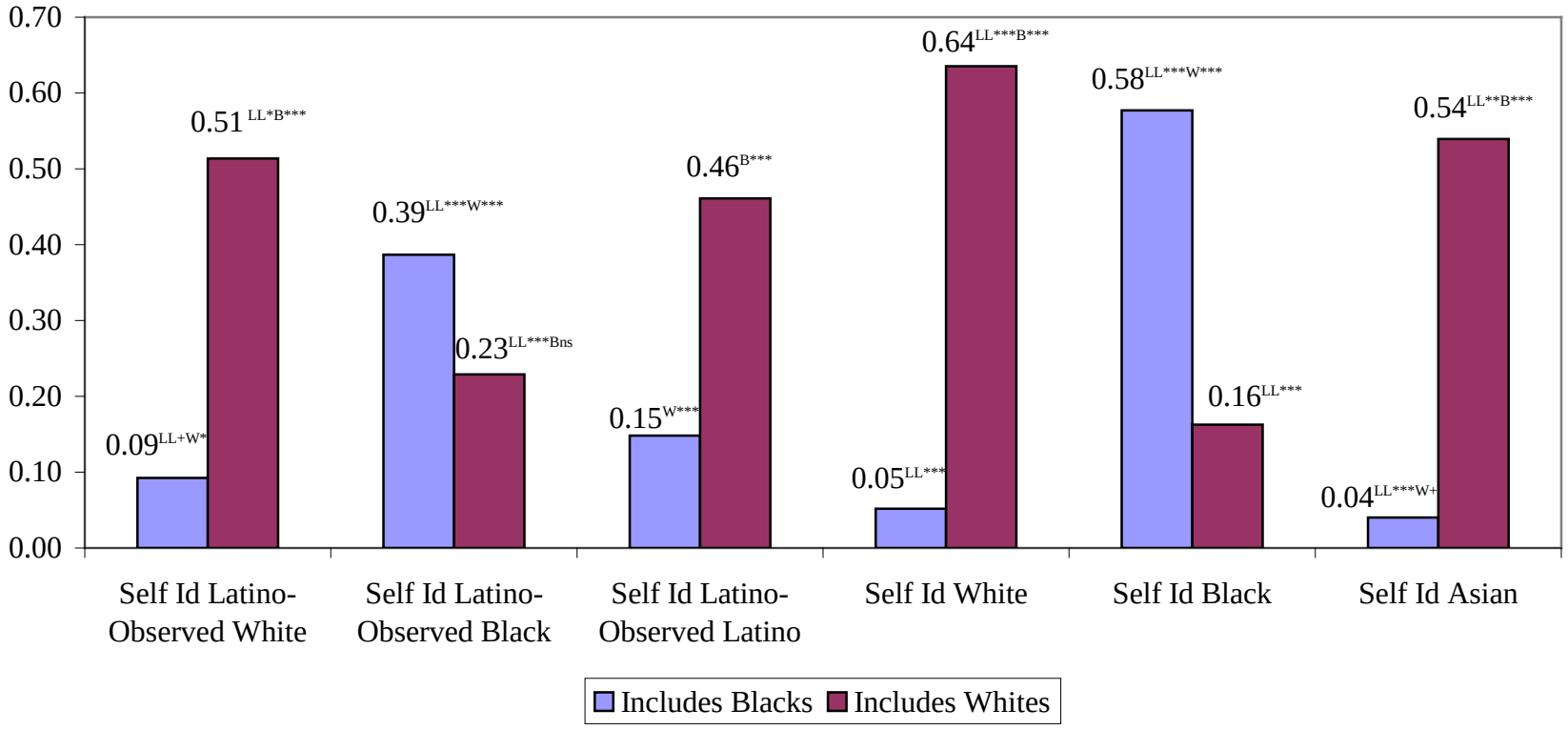


Figure 2. Predicted Probabilities of Including Whites and Blacks as Possible Dates, by Self-Identified Race and, for Latinos, Observed Race, Yahoo Internet Daters



Notes: LL=significance test relative to observed Latinos, W=significance test relative to self-id Whites, B=significance test relative to self-id Blacks, $^{ns}p>.10$, $+p < .10$, $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$
Models control for gender, age, metropolitan area, racial composition of municipality, education, body type, religion, Spanish language, choosiness, preferences for religion, body type, education and height.
.

Appendix Table 1. Relative Risk Ratios from Multinomial Regressions of Including Whites, Yahoo Internet Daters, N=6070

	Includes Whites vs. Excludes Whites		No Stated Preference vs. Excludes Whites	
Race:				
Self-id Latino - Observed Latino	6.08	***	1.88	***
Seld-id Latino - Observed Black	1.58		1.07	
Self-id Latino - Observed White	10.53	***	3.17	***
Self-id Latino - Observed Other	8.61	***	2.65	**
Self-id White	48.88	***	11.32	***
Self-id Asian	8.75	***	2.05	***
(reference = Self-id Black)				
Female	1.22	*	0.78	**
Age	1.01		0.98	***
Metropolitan Area:				
Los Angeles	0.79	*	1.31	*
New York	1.07		1.45	*
Chicago	1.12		1.48	**
(reference = Atlanta)				
Racial Composition of Municipality:				
Percentage of Non-Hispanic Whites	1.01	***	1.01	**
Education:				
Some College	1.10		1.11	
College Graduate	0.99		1.05	
Post Graduate	0.98		1.13	
(reference = High School or less)				
Body Type:				
Slender/Fit/Average Body type (vs. thick, large)	1.99	***	1.83	***
Body type - did not answer	2.60	**	2.61	**
(reference = thick, large)				
Politically Liberal	0.94		1.40	**
Religion				
Christian	0.78	*	0.79	*
Other Religion	0.91		0.91	
Religion - did not answer	0.83		0.89	
(reference = not religious)				
Spanish Language				
Speaks Spanish	1.12		1.16	
Spanish language - did not answer	1.02		0.71	
(reference = Does Not Speak Spanish)				
Preferences for Other Characteristics				
Choosiness (% of preferences)	1.01	**	0.98	***

Preference for Religion	0.95	0.70	**
Preference for Body Type	1.69	0.85	
Preference for Education	1.30	1.41	***
Preference for Height	0.92	0.80	*

Notes: +p < .10 *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Appendix Table 2. Relative Risk Ratios from Multinomial Regressions of Including Blacks, Yahoo Internet Daters, N=6070

	Include Blacks vs. Excludes Blacks		No Stated Preference vs. Excludes Blacks	
Race:				
Self-id Latino - Observed Latino	3.29	***	1.11	
Seld-id Latino - Observed Black	16.94	***	2.36	**
Self-id Latino - Observed White	1.97	*	1.18	
Self-id Latino - Observed Other	2.57	**	1.18	
Self-id Black	98.50	***	9.48	***
Self-id Asian	0.70	+	0.76	**
(reference = Self-id White)				
Female	1.26	*	0.75	***
Age	1.00		0.98	***
Metropolitan Area:				
Los Angeles	0.92		1.56	***
New York	0.79	+	1.34	**
Chicago	0.69	**	1.26	*
(reference = Atlanta)				
Racial Composition of Municipality:				
Percentage of Non-Hispanic Blacks	1.01	**	1.00	+
Education:				
Some College	0.70	*	0.95	
College Graduate	0.57	**	0.90	
Post Graduate	0.66	*	1.01	
(reference = High School or less)				
Body Type:				
Slender/Fit/Average Body type (vs. thick, large)	0.56	***	0.96	
Body type - did not answer	0.88		1.32	
(reference = thick, large)				
Politically Liberal	1.18		1.55	***
Religion				
Christian	1.04		0.94	
Other Religion	1.06		1.01	
Religion - did not answer	1.30	+	1.11	
(reference = not religious)				
Spanish Language				
Speaks Spanish	0.70		0.95	
Spanish language - did not answer	0.87		0.63	***
(reference = Does Not Speak Spanish)				
Preferences for Other Characteristics				
Choosiness (% of preferences)	1.00		0.97	***

Preference for Religion	0.77	*	0.67	***
Preference for Body Type	0.76	*	0.57	***
Preference for Education	0.97		1.18	*
Preference for Height	1.06		0.87	+

Notes: +p < .10 *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

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