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# WORKING PAPER No. 2015-03

# The Immigrant Experience: Houstonians' Family Attitudes and Behaviors

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February 2015

RICE

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## Abstract

As the United States grows increasingly diverse, it will be crucial to understand what, if any, differences in families' behaviors and attitudes exist across all racial and ethnic groups. This study examines data from the 2011 Houston Area Survey in order to compare family behaviors and attitudes across four racial/ethnic groups in the Houston metropolitan area. In particular, this study examines three behaviors (marital status, number of children, and interracial unions) and two attitudes (maternal employment and same-sex marriage) of native-born Whites, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Latinos, along with foreign-born Asians and Latinos. Our behavioral results suggest that as Houston becomes increasingly diverse, the family behaviors of the city may change, as non-Whites are more likely to be involved with interracial unions and have, on average, more children than whites do. On the other hand, our attitudinal results support more classic, linear assimilation theories, with only immigrant groups holding different views toward maternal employment than whites.

## Introduction

Since the passage of the 1965 Immigrant Act, the United States has become increasingly diverse, as large number of immigrants have arrived from Latin America and Asia (Portes and Rumbaut 1990). From 1980 to 2010, the percentage of Latino children in the United States more than doubled, increasing from 9 percent to 24 percent, and the percentage is projected to increase to 27 percent by 2020 (Child Trends 2012). Asian children comprised 4.6 percent of the child population in 2010, and they are expected to comprise 5 percent of the child population by 2021 (Child Trends 2012). Conversely, from 2000 to 2010, the percentage of non-Hispanic White children declined from 61 percent to 54 percent, and the percentage is projected to decline to 51 percent by 2021 (Child Trends 2012). Foreign-born children, known as the first generation, and American-born children of foreign-born parents, known as the second generation, are the fastest growing demographic groups in the American population. From 1994 to 2012, the percentage of children who are first or second generation immigrants increased from 18 to 25 percent, and 56 percent of these children were of Hispanic origin while 17 percent were of Asian descent (Child Trends 2013).

Beyond these dynamic demographic changes, it is also important to note that the last 50 years has been a period of dramatic change for the American family. The institution of marriage has undergone profound transformations; in 1960 72 percent of American adults were married compared to only 51 percent of American adults in 2011 (Fry 2012). In addition, the median age of first marriage has risen from approximately 23 for men and 20 for women in 1960 to 29.0 for men and 26.6 for women in 2013 (U.S. Census Bureau 2013). Conversely, cohabitation has become increasingly widespread; women are increasingly likely to cohabit as their first union. In 1995, 34 percent of women's first union was cohabitation, compared to 48 percent of women's

first union from 2006 to 2010. Furthermore, from 2006 to 2010, 74 percent of women had cohabited (i.e. could be the first, second, or so on union) by age 30 (Copen, Daniels, and Mosher, 2013). Attitudes toward the family have also undergone some dramatic shifts. In 2010, 62 percent of Americans believed that the best marriage is one where both husbands and wives work, take care of the household, and take care of the children. In 1977, only 48 percent endorsed this egalitarian marriage as the best type of marriage (Pew Research Center 2010). This marks a significant change that has coincided with the emergence of other transformative views of the family. For example, in 2013, for the first time, over half (51 percent) of polled Pew Respondents favored allowing gays and lesbians to marry (Pew Research Center 2013). The changing ethnic diversity, along with changing family patterns and attitudes, have brought about rapid cultural and structural change to American society and provide a rich context for social and demographic study.

While there is extensive scholarship that examines differences in family behaviors and attitudes between Whites and African-Americans, along with a growing and large body of scholarship that examines Latino families, there is considerably less scholarship that examines Asian-American families. In addition, there are very few studies that examine differences in behaviors and attitudes across all four main racial and ethnic groups in the United States. As the United States grows increasingly diverse, it will be crucial to understand what, if any, differences in families' behaviors and attitudes exist across all racial and ethnic groups. In 2012, 49.8 percent of Latino adults were foreign-born (Krogstad and Lopez 2014) while in 2010, 66.5 percent of Asians were foreign-born (Immigration Policy Center). Any study that seeks to understand family differences across racial/ethnic groups in the United States must also understand family differences by immigrant generation, as immigration itself may be influencing

family behaviors and attitudes. The city of Houston is an ideal location in which to study this relationship between ethnicity and family patterns, due to its diversity. In 2012, 63 percent of Americans were White, non-Hispanic, 16.9 percent were Hispanic/Latino, 13.1 percent were African-American, and 5.1 percent were Asian (U.S. Census Bureau 2014). Conversely, in 2010 in Harris County, the county in which the city of Houston is located, 7.7 percent of residents were Asian, 40.8 percent were Latino, 18.4 percent were African-American, and 33 percent were White (Klineberg 2013). 28.3 percent of Houston residents were foreign-born, making the metropolitan area the fifth largest immigrant city in the nation (U.S. Census Bureau 2014; see Migration Policy Institute's tabulation of pooled American Community Surveys data at http://migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-immigrant-population-metropolitan-area).

In the current study, we seek to explore Houstonians' family behaviors and attitudes by examining data from the Houston Area Survey. In 1982, The Kinder Institute at Rice University first fielded the Houston Area Survey, a random-digit-dialed, computer-assisted telephone survey of Harris County residents. Since 1982, the Kinder Institute has conducted the Houston Area Survey annually every February and March. Data from the Houston Area Survey, then, is a rich source with which to examine differences in family behaviors and attitudes by race/ethnicity, and by immigrant status. Migration is an important factor in Houston's diversity, and it is important to know if Houstonians' family attitudes and behaviors differ by immigrant status. If so, these differences could have an impact on how the city of Houston grows and changes, as it may impact and influence family and social patterns.

### *Theoretical Framework: Socialization and Assimilation*

Socialization theory is a common framework for studying family processes in social science research. Socialization theory explains how the family and the larger community influence the development of youth (Maccoby 1992; Maccoby and Martin 1983). Socialization's main function with the family is to teach children the values, attitudes, norms, and behaviors most valued by the family, as well as to prepare adolescents to assume adult roles in society. Parents are considered particularly important in the socialization of children (De Valk et al. 2007), as childhood living arrangements and interactions between parents and children during childhood have both long-term and potentially permanent effects on children (Hetherington 1972; Rutter 1971).

Socialization theory is also prominently featured in assimilation theories, which point to socialization process, particularly within the family context, as playing an important role in the acculturation of immigrant children (Portes 1996; Zhou 1999). As compared to third generation youth, first and second generation youth are more likely to have closer ties to their cultural traditions and ethnic values; they are more likely to speak a language other than English at home, particularly the first generation, and they typically grow up embedded within tightly knit social networks in ethnic communities (Zhou 1997; Zhou and Bankston 1996).

The traditional assimilation model argues that the length of residence, coupled with succeeding generations, leads to a narrowing of differentials with the native-born population (Park 1950; Gordon 1964; South, Crowder and Chavez 2005). In other words, the longer an immigrant lives in his or her new nation, or the further removed by generation an individual is from first-generation ancestors, the more likely he or she is to become virtually indistinguishable from average, native-born Americans (Gordon 1964). This process is what Gordon and others

described as linear-assimilation (Gordon 1964; Arias 2001; Wildsmith 2004). A linear assimilation model suggests that there should be differences with regard to family behaviors and attitudes by immigrant generation, and that these differences should narrow both across generation and over time. However, while contemporary theorists who support this more general assimilation framework still believe that new immigrants will become less ethnic the further generationally they are removed from their immigrant roots, they also suggest that immigrants do not necessarily lose their culture, but rather mainstream society absorbs it over time (Alba and Nee 1997). This more segmented assimilation model suggests that there may be diverse experiences with regard to assimilation and the degree to which popular opinion and beliefs about the family have been either adopted by those assimilating, or the degree to which mainstream culture has absorbed the cultural norms and perspectives of those assimilating; this can influence the behaviors and attitudes that individuals display.

Time is not necessarily as important as the cultural, and perhaps ethnic, context and circumstances of immigrants' assimilation (Alba and Nee 1997). For example, the social structure of the United States, in particular its stratification by race and class, can deny opportunities for certain immigrant groups, which can lead to downward mobility and clear differences in both their family structures and their views of the family, ideal or otherwise from native-born Americans (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou and Xiong 2005). Segmented assimilation can affect both the degree to which immigrants assimilate and the extent to which their views on the family align with those of native-born Americans or popular opinion. These processes are not uniform across immigrants and are likewise not necessarily as linear as Gordon and other traditional or classical assimilation theorists suggest (Greenman and Xie 2007).

Assimilation is very complex and multifaceted, as it encompasses various life domains across time and contexts. Typically, researchers have studied cultural assimilation by examining the languages individuals speak, the cultural norms they follow and their role expectations (Gordon 1964). As Glick (2010) notes in her review of immigrant families, studies traditionally looked for signs of assimilation in the family context by examining intermarriage. More recently studies have looked for signs of assimilation with regard to other family behaviors, such as entering into marriage (Lloyd 2006; Oropesa and Landale 2004) and cohabitation (Brown, Van Hook, and Glick 2008). In addition to behaviors, researchers have also started to study attitudes toward gender roles (Lam, McHale, and Updegraff 2012; Su, Richardson, and Wang 2010; Updegraff et al. 2012).

### *Behavioral Differences in Families*

Research on immigrant families indicates that there are generational differences in various family behaviors, including marital timing, union formation, family structure, and childbearing. These findings suggest that socialization of individuals of different generations may differ, explaining the generational differences in family patterns and behaviors in young adulthood. For example, Landale and Oropesa (2007) studied marital timing and found that foreign born Latino females are more likely to marry at earlier ages than the native born. Chen, Harris, and Guo (2005) examined the union formation of nine ethnic groups and found that the first generation is more likely to marry at a young age as compared to young adults in the third generation. Rates of cohabitation also differ by generational status, as succeeding generations are more likely to cohabit than the first generation (Brown, Van Hook, and Glick 2008; Chen, Harris, and Guo 2005). These findings support classic assimilation theories because the first generation displays family behaviors closer to its ethnic traditions while later generations adopt

native norms. Similar findings occur for family structure. Family size and marriage propensity diminish while non-marital childbearing increases across generations for females of Mexican descent (Landale and Oropesa 2007). In terms of fertility, Durand, Telles, and Flashman (2006) found that number of children ever born to women of Mexican descent is higher for the first generation (2.7) than it is for the second (2.1) and the third (2.3). These findings suggest that family behavior of immigrants increasingly reflects the family behavior of natives across succeeding generations.

### *Attitudinal Differences in Families*

When discussing generational differences in family behavior, it is virtually impossible to discuss differences without also referencing race and ethnicity. As Bryant et al. (2008) state, "ethnicity and culture are powerful lenses through which individuals and couples construct notions of marriage, family, work-family task enactment and expectations, and economic relations within the context of marriage and family" (241). Researchers often invoke cultural explanations for Latino family patterns that occur in the United States. Cultural explanations tend to revolve around the concept of familism, which refers to a collective orientation and implies that family roles are highly valued (Lansdale and Oropesa 2007). Embedded within the notion of familism is the idea that the commitment to family by Latinos and non-Latinos is qualitatively distinct (Vega 1995). In particular, traditional gender role attitudes have been highlighted as a key cultural variable of Latino families (Cauce and Domenech-Rodriguez 2002). This literature suggests, therefore, that Latinos, particularly Latino immigrants, may have different attitudes toward the family than Whites and African-Americans.

While far less research has involved cultural explanations for the family patterns and dynamics of Asian-American families, research does suggest that Asian-Americans value the

family highly. As Chao and Tseng (2002) note, the most often cited characteristic with regard to Asian-American parenting is the strong emphasis that is placed upon familial interdependence. In a review of the diversity within Asian-American families, Ishii-Kuntz (2000) noted that Asian-Americans, compared to those of European-American descent, were more likely to live closer to, provide more financial support to, feel more obligated toward, and interact more frequently with their parents as adults. These findings suggest that Asian-Americans, like Latinos, are socialized in a cultural environment that places a high value on collective orientation and the family.

Gender role attitudes have been studied extensively in the United States, and in recent years, researchers have focused upon exploring differences in gender role attitudes by gender and race/ethnicity. The American population as a whole became more egalitarian with regard to gender roles from the 1970s to the 1990s (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Brewster and Padavic 2000; Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2011), but this shift in attitudes seemingly stalled in the 1990s (Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2011). Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman (2011) believe that the lack of change in gender role attitudes is due to "egalitarian essentialism," which is a cultural frame that blends together feminist equality with traditional motherhood roles while Gerson (2009) believes that there is an "unfinished revolution."

Research suggests that women hold more egalitarian gender role attitudes than men (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Brewster and Padavic 2000; Carter, Corra, and Carter 2009; Ciabattari 2001) and that African-American females hold more egalitarian gender role attitudes than White females, White males, and African-American males (Carter, Corra, and Carter 2009; Kane 2000; Kane and Kyyro 2001). While studies initially seemed to focus upon differences between African-Americans and Whites, more recent work has started to examine gender role

attitudes of other racial/ethnic groups. There is considerable variability among Mexican-Americans with regard to gender role attitudes, which challenges stereotypical views of Latino families as very traditional and patriarchal in their views (Lam, McHale, and Updegraff 2012). Mexican Americans with higher levels of education (Leaper and Valin 1996; Phinney and Flores 2002) and higher generational status are more likely to hold egalitarian views (Leaper and Valin 1996; Phinney and Flores 2002; Su, Richardson, and Wang 2010; Updengraff et al. 2012). While some research indicates that individuals of Asian descent hold more traditional gender role attitudes than those of European descent (Chang 1999), other studies have found that young adults of Asian and European ethnicity both display relatively high levels of support for egalitarian gender roles (Gere and Helwig 2012).

Similar to gender role attitudes, same-sex marriage attitudes have changed dramatically since the 1970s (Baunach 2012; Loftus 2001). Baunach (2012) believes that these changing attitudes, which indicate higher levels of tolerance and approval of same-sex marriage, indicate a cultural shift. In 1988, support for same-sex marriage was limited to a metropolitan, liberal elite whereas support for same-sex marriage was much more broad-based in 2010 (Baunach 2012). Opposition to same-sex marriage is strongest among older Americans, African-Americans, southerners, evangelical Protestants, and Republicans (Baunach 2012). Few studies have examined Latinos' views toward same-sex marriage; the research that has been conducted suggests that much like with regard to gender role attitudes, Latinos vary in their attitudes. Evangelical Latinos are more likely to oppose same-sex marriage than Catholic Latinos, as are men and older Latinos (Ellison, Acevedo, and Ramos-Wada 2011). There is even less research which examines Asian-Americans views toward same-sex marriage.

Internationally, Pew Research Center has examined acceptance of homosexuality across countries. While acceptance of homosexuality does not necessarily mean individuals support same-sex marriage, it does offer insight into how attitudes toward same-sex marriage may vary across racial and ethnic groups. Pew found acceptance for homosexuality really varied among the surveyed Asian countries. 73 percent of respondents from the Philippines believed homosexuality should be accepted compared to 54 percent of Japanese respondents, 39 percent of South Korean respondents, 21 percent of Chinese respondents, 9 percent of Malaysian respondents, 3 percent of Indonesian respondents, and 2 percent of Pakistani respondents (Pew Research Center 2013). The acceptance of homosexuality also varied in Latin America; 74 percent of Argentineans believed homosexuality should be accepted compared to 68 percent of Chileans, 61 percent of Mexicans, 60 percent of Brazilians, 51 percent of Venezuelans, 43 percent of Bolivians, and 34 percent of Salvadorians (Pew Research Center 2013).

### *Purpose of Study*

The goal of this study is to examine Houstonians' family behaviors and attitudes. In particular, we explore whether or not family behaviors and attitudes vary by race/ethnicity and immigrant generation. We are especially curious how Latinos' and Asians' behaviors and attitudes compare to native Whites, and if native-born Latinos and Asians are more culturally assimilated than immigrant Latinos and Asians. We examine three family behaviors: a respondent's current marital status, whether or not a respondent has ever been romantically involved with members of difference racial/ethnic groups, and the number of children a respondent has and two family attitudes: attitudes toward working mothers and same-sex marriage. We believe that these measures can help us better understand assimilation as it relates

to the family, and that these measures provide a strong understanding of the family's function within the city of Houston.

## Methods

### *Data*

Data come from the Houston Area Survey, which is an ongoing, annual random-digit dialed, computer-assisted telephone survey of Houston residents. The Houston Area Survey has a wide range of topics covered, including demographics and attitudes toward the family. The first survey was conducted in 1982 so the Houston Area Survey is a rich source of data that can be used to assess continuity and change in the city of Houston for the past three decades. For additional information on the Houston Area Survey, see http://kinder.rice.edu/has/ .

This study uses data from the 2011 survey because it included an oversample of Asians. This data will allow us to include both native Asians and Asian immigrants in our analysis. The more recent waves of data do not include these oversamples, and thus, we would not be able to include Asian respondents in our analysis, due to too few respondents. The analysis is limited to individuals who can be classified as White, African-American, native Latino, Immigrant Latino, native Asian, or Immigrant Asian and who do not have missing data on any of the variables of interest. The data is weighted to ensure that it provides the most accurate representation of Houstonians' family behaviors and attitudes. The sample size for this analysis is 1,305.

### *Measures*

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for all measures in this study.

*Dependent Variables: Family Behaviors*

Three family behavior measures have been constructed from the 2011 survey for this analysis: marital status, interracial romantic relationships, and number of children. For marital status, our measure is constructed from the following question: *Are you married, in a domestic partnership, separated, divorced, widowed, or have you never been married?* Descriptively, we present five categories: married, domestic partnership, separate/divorced, widowed, and never married. For the multivariate analysis, we created a dummy variable and simply examine whether or not respondents are married. For dating other race/ethnicities, our measure is constructed from the following question: *Have you ever been in a romantic relationship with someone who was not [R's ethnicity]?* Respondents could answer either "no" or "yes" to this question. We coded responses so that a *1=yes while a 0=no.* For the number of children, our measure is constructed from the following question: *Do you have any children? If "yes": How many children do you have?* If respondents answered no to the initial question, they were coded as having 0 children.

*Dependent Variables: Family Attitudes*

Two family attitudinal measures have been constructed from the 2011 survey for this analysis: working mothers and same-sex marriage. For attitudes toward working mothers, our measure is constructed from the following item in which respondents were asked to indicate whether they disagree or agree with this statement: *Preschool children are likely to have problems later in life if both of their parents work.* We coded responses so that a *1=agree while a 0 =disagree*. For attitudes toward same-sex marriage, our measure is constructed from the following item in which respondents were asked to indicate whether they disagree or agree with this statement: *Marriage between homosexuals should be given the same legal status as heterosexual marriages.* We again coded responses so that a *1=agree while a 0=disagree*.

*Main Explanatory Variables of Interest: Immigrant Generation and Race/Ethnicity*

Race/ethnicity and immigration status were self-reported by respondents. Respondents can be classified as White, African-American, Latino, Latino Immigrants, Asian, and Asian Immigrants. Respondents who are classified as White, African-American, Latino, and Asian were all born in the United States. Latino Immigrants and Asian Immigrants are the only non-native group examined in this analysis. For all analyses, a series of dummy variables were created, and White is used as the reference category.

Control Variables

In order to fully understand the relationship between family behaviors, family attitudes, race/ethnicity, and immigrant generation, we control for several factors that are also likely to impact family behaviors and attitudes. First, we include contextual factors, which taps into how assimilated a respondent may be in American society. We examine two contextual measures: whether or not a respondent reports close friends of different race/ethnicities and the language in which the interview was conducted. We constructed the "friends" measure from a series of questions. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had close personal friends who are Anglo, Black, Latino, and Asian. We created a measure that examines how many times a respondent reported "yes" to all but their own racial/ethnic group. Answers could range from *0 (no friends reported from other racial/ethnic groups) to 3 (close friends reported from all three other racial/ethnic groups)*. So, for example, if a White respondent, answered "yes" to Black, Latino, and Asian, they received a score of "3" for this measure, which indicates that the respondent reported close personal friends from all three other racial/other groups. Conversely, if a White respondent answered "no" to Black, Latino, and Asian, they received a score of "0" for this measure, which indicated that a respondent did not report any close personal friends from

other racial/ethnic groups. We also created a dichotomous indicates that measures whether or not the Houston Area Survey was administered in a language other than English. A *0=English and a 1=non-English.*

We also control for basic demographic factors (gender and age). A dummy variable has been constructed in order to examine gender, where a *0=male and a 1=female*. The measure for age is the respondent's age at the time of the 2011 survey. Finally, we control for a respondent's educational attainment and religious importance. A respondent's educational attainment was measured by a dummy variable created from 2013, which indicated *whether a respondent had attained a college degree or higher = 1 or whether the respondent had attained less than a college degree = 0*. Religious importance is assessed by the following question: How important would you say religion is in your life? *Would you say: very important, somewhat important, or not very important?* Responses were recoded so that a higher number indicates a higher level of religious importance.

While marital status and number of children are dependent variables of interest in the analysis that examines family behaviors, they are also control variables of interest in the family attitudinal analysis. In addition, marital status is included as a control in the analysis of the number of children. In these analyses, marital status is represented by a series of dummy variables, with married as the reference category.

[Insert Table 1 Here]

### *Analytic Strategy*

In this paper, we examine three family behaviors: marital status, interracial romantic relationships, and number of children and two family attitudes: working mother attitudes and same-sex marriage attitudes. First, we present descriptive data that examines whether or not there

are any differences by race/ethnicity. Then, we employ multivariate analysis to better understand differences in these behaviors and attitudes in 2011. We use ordinary least square regression to assess the relationship between race/ethnicity, our control variables, and number of children while we use logistic regression to assess the relationship between race/ethnicity, our control variables, and the other two family behaviors: marital status and interracial romantic relationships. For the attitudinal analysis, we employ logistic regression since both attitudinal measures are dichotomous. For all analyses, we estimate three models. We first examine the bivariate relationship between race/ethnicity and each family behavior/attitude. Model 2 then examines the relationship between race/ethnicity, contextual measures and each family behavior/attitude measure. Finally, Model 3 examines the relationship between race/ethnicity, contextual measures, demographics, religious importance and each family behavior/attitude. In addition, we also examined whether or not there were significant interactions between race/ethnicity and gender and race/ethnicity and educational attainments. We did not find any significant interactions in the analysis so we do not report any results from any interaction effects.

## Results

### *Family Behaviors*

Graph 1 presents data with regard to how marital status varies by race/ethnicity. In 2011, 55.25 percent of Whites were married, compared to 44.16 percent of African-Americans, 44.81 percent of Latinos, 59.38 percent of Latino Immigrants, 39.00 percent of Asians, and 66.37 percent of Asian Immigrants.

[Insert Graph 1 Here]

Graph 2 presents data with regard to interracial romantic relationships. In 2011, only 28.18 percent of Whites had ever been involved in an interracial romantic relationship, compared to 44.16 percent of African-Americans, 60.39 percent of Latinos, 46.88 percent of Latino Immigrants, 67.00 percent of Asians, and 34.07 percent of Asian Immigrants.

[Insert Graph 2 Here]

Graph 3 presents data with regard to average number of children. In 2011, Whites had on average 1.78 children while African-Americans had 2.09 children, Latinos 1.48 children, Latino Immigrants 2.06 children, Asians 1.23 children, and Asian Immigrants 1.57 children.

[Insert Graph 3 Here]

### *Family Attitudes*

Graph 4 presents data with regard to attitudes toward working mothers. In 2011, 31.49 percent of Whites agreed that children will have problems if their mother worked, compared to 26.90 percent of African-Americans, 27.60 percent of Latinos, 52.08 percent of Latino Immigrants, 32.00 percent of Asians, and 45.13 percent of Asian Immigrants.

[Insert Graph 4 Here]

Graph 5 presents data with regard to attitudes toward gay marriage. In 2011, 44.75 percent of Whites were in favor of granting equal rights to same-sex marriage as compared to 33.50 percent of African-Americans, 58.77 percent of Latinos, 52.08 percent of Latino Immigrants, 57.00 percent of Asians, and 47.35 percent of Asian immigrants.

[Insert Graph 5 Here]

### *Multivariate Analysis: Family Behaviors*

Table 2 presents the odds ratios from the models of marital status regressed on race/ethnicity, contextual measures, demographics, and religious importance. The results do

suggest that marital status differs by race/ethnicity. In the first model, which only examines the bivariate relationship between race/ethnicity and marital status, African-Americans and Asians have a lower likelihood of being married than Whites do. This relationship holds in both Model 2, where contextual measures are added, and in Model 3, where demographic factors and religious importance are included. There is not a statistically significant difference in marital status between Whites and Latinos, Whites and Latino Immigrants, and Whites and Asian Immigrants.

In addition, the results from the control variables are consistent with previous literature. Older individuals have a higher likelihood of being married than younger individuals while individuals who have attained a college degree or higher have a greater likelihood of being married than those who have attained less than a college degree. Finally, individuals with higher levels of religious importance are more likely to be married than individuals with lower levels of religious importance. There was not a statistically significant relationship between either of the contextual measures and marital status or gender and marital status.

[Insert Table 2 Here]

Table 3 presents the odds ratios from the models of interracial romantic relationships regressed on race/ethnicity, contextual measures, demographics, and religious importance. The results do suggest that interracial romantic relationships differ by race/ethnicity. In the first model, which only examines the bivariate relationship between race/ethnicity and interracial romantic relationships, African-Americans, Latinos, and Asians have a higher likelihood of participating in romantic relationships than Whites do. This relationship holds in both Model 2, where contextual measures are added, and in Model 3, where demographic factors and religious importance are included. There is not a statistically significant difference in interracial romantic

relationship participation between Whites and Latino Immigrants and Whites and Asian Immigrants.

In addition, the results from the control variable are consistent with previous literature. Individuals who report more close friends of other race/ethnicities are more likely to have participated in interracial romantic relationships. Females are less likely to have participated in interracial romantic relationships than males. Older individuals have a lower likelihood of participating in interracial romantic relationships than younger individuals while individuals with higher levels of religious importance are less likely to have participated in interracial romantic relationships than individuals with lower levels of religious importance. There was not a statistically significant relationship between educational attainment and interracial romantic relationships or language of interview and interracial romantic relationships.

[Insert Table 3 Here]

Table 4 presents the coefficients from the models of number of children regressed on race/ethnicity, demographics, and religious importance. The results do suggest that number of children varies by race/ethnicity. In the first model, which only examines the bivariate relationship between race/ethnicity and number of children, African-Americans and Latino Immigrants have more children than Whites do, and these relationships hold once contextual measures, demographics, and religious importance are added to the model. Once additional controls are added in Model 3, the difference in number of children between Whites and Latinos and Whites and Asians are now statistically significant; both groups have more children, on average, than Whites do. There is no difference in the number of children between Whites and Asian immigrants.

In addition, the results from the control variable are consistent with previous literature. Individuals in domestic partnerships and never married individuals report fewer children than married individuals. Older individuals report more children than younger individuals while individuals who have attained a college degree or higher report fewer children than those who have attained less than a college degree. Females report more children than males do.

[Insert Table 4 Here]

### *Multivariate Analysis: Family Attitudes*

Table 5 presents the odds ratios from the models of attitudes toward working mothers regressed on race/ethnicity, demographics, and religious importance. The results do suggest attitudes toward working mothers differ by race/ethnicity. In particular, it seems like there are differences by immigrant status. In the first model, which only examines the bivariate relationship between race/ethnicity and working mother attitudes, Latino Immigrants and Asian Immigrants have a higher likelihood of believing that children will have problems if their mother works than Whites do. This relationship holds in both Model 2 and Model 3. There is not a statistically significant difference between Whites and African-Americans, Whites and Latinos, or Whites and Asians with regard to working mother attitudes. None of the control variables have a statistically significant relationship with attitudes toward working mothers.

[Insert Table 5 Here]

Table 6 presents the odds ratios from the models of attitudes toward same-sex marriage regressed on race/ethnicity, demographics, and religious importance. The results suggest that attitudes toward same-sex marriage do differ by race/ethnicity. In the first model, which only examines the bivariate relationship between race/ethnicity and same-sex marriage attitudes, Latinos and Asians have a higher likelihood of favoring same-sex marriage equality than Whites

do. This difference in attitudes between Asians and Whites, however, is no longer statistically significant in Model 3, where all control variables are included. There is not a statistically significant difference between Whites and African-Americans, Whites and Latino Immigrants, and Whites and Asian Immigrants with regard to same-sex marriage attitudes.

In addition, the results from the control variable are consistent with previous literature. Older individuals have a lower likelihood of favoring same-sex marriage equality compared to younger individuals while females have a greater likelihood of favoring same-sex marriage equality than males. Not surprisingly, individuals with higher levels of religious importance have a lower likelihood of favoring same-sex marriage equality than individuals with lower levels of religious importance.

[Insert Table 6 Here]

## Conclusion

As the United States continues to diversify racially and ethnically, it is not a surprise that its attitudes and views about the family, in addition to the structure of the family itself, have changed alongside these demographic transformations. Immigration has played a prominent role in both of these trends—the diversification of the nation and changes in and around the family. Like the revolutionary transformation of the nation at the turn of the 20th Century, the United States today has once again emerged as an immigrant nation. In fact, the nation is now home to more immigrants than at any point in its history. This changing ethnic diversity, along with changing family patterns and attitudes, have brought about rapid cultural and structural change to American society and have provided us with a rich context for studying the social and demographic transformation of the American family. Although previous scholarship has examined differences in family behaviors and attitudes between Whites, African-Americans, and

Latinos, there is considerably less scholarship that examines Asian-American families, and even less that examine differences in behaviors and attitudes across all four groups. We do this, in addition to looking at variation across immigrant generation.

Drawing on data from the Houston Area Survey which includes a rare oversample of Asians that allows for comparative analysis to Whites, African-Americans and Latinos, several noteworthy findings emerged. First, we find that family behaviors and attitudes can vary by race/ethnicity. Our behavioral results suggest that as Houston becomes increasingly diverse, the family patterns within the city may change. Non-White Houstonians are more likely to date members of other racial/ethnic groups, which indicates that Houston may become even more diverse in future years, as there may increasingly be interracial unions, which may produce children who can claim multiple racial and ethnic heritages. Non-Whites are also more likely to have more children than whites, which suggests that the population may grow at faster rates in Houston than other less diverse cities in the United States.

Second, we found differences in family attitudes by race/ethnicity and immigrant generation. With regard to attitudes toward working mothers, the results support classic assimilation theories, where increasing generations of a racial/ethnic group more closely resemble native Whites than earlier generations do. Both Latino and Asian immigrants are more likely to believe that children with working mothers will have problems growing up than Whites do while there is no statistically significant differences between native-born Latinos and Asians with Whites. These results suggest that increased exposure to American culture leads to an adoption of native attitudes. It will be interesting to examine, though, whether this patterns holds in the future. If migration streams increase and more Houstonians are foreign-born, will we still see this pattern?

The increasing size and density of each immigrant group, in addition to its residential patterns, may impact the degree to which the wider Houston context influences changes in family structure and attitudes or the extent to which ethnic and racial enclaves insulate these groups from this influence. In other words, as Houston diversifies and grows via immigration, immigrant attitudes and views about the family, in addition to the structure of the family itself, may not change dramatically overtime and across generations because immigrants will have less need or desire to assimilate to native patterns. Our current data support a more linear view of immigrant assimilation, but it is very likely that as Houston continues to diversify that these patterns will not only change but likely reverse. In the future, it is entirely possible to see a greater influence of immigrant views and attitudes on the wider city, native-born or otherwise. Immigrants may not trend toward linear assimilation, but rather a more segmented reality in which the wider city absorbs their cultural understandings of the family. In other words, immigrants will influence the city more than the city influences them. For example, the results with regard to same-sex marriage equality suggest that increased migration and diversity within Houston could hasten social change and acceptance. Latinos are more likely than Whites to believe in same-sex marriage equality. As the Latino population continues to grow, this difference could have important ramifications on the acceptance of same-sex marriage within the city, and potentially, the state.

We believe that our paper makes a strong contribution to the literature on how family behaviors and attitudes differ by race/ethnicity and immigrant status and the ramifications these differences may have for cities like Houston that are being shaped by large migration streams. Very few previous studies have been able to include Asians in their analysis, which limits our understanding of family patterns in the United States. While this paper is an important advance,

future work can build upon this paper by examining other family behaviors and attitudes. For example, studies could look at divorce, age at marriage, and attitudes toward parenting. In addition, it would be incredibly beneficial to be able to compare sub-groups within Latinos and Asians (i.e. compare Mexicans to Cubans or Chinese to Filipinos). It is highly unlikely that structures and attitudes are uniform across all groups, and this level of analysis will further our understanding of the role migration plays on families in cities like Houston. Despite the limitations inherent in our data, given its sample is drawn exclusively from the Houston metropolitan area, Houston is the fourth largest city in the nation, the fifth largest immigrant statistical area (MSA), and the most racially and ethnically diverse metropolitan area in the nation. What we can learn from Houston matters and is likely indicative of larger emerging national trends.

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**Table 1: Family Behaviors, Family Attitudes, Demographic Variables, and Religious Importance: Descriptive Statistics, N=1305**

| Variables | Mean/ *Percent* | SD | Range |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Race/Ethnicity** | | | |
| White | 13.87% | ----- | ----- |
| African-American | 30.19% | ----- | ----- |
| Latino | 23.60% | ----- | ----- |
| Latino Immigrant | 7.35% | ----- | ----- |
| Asian | 7.66% | | |
| Asian Immigrant | 17.3% | | |
| **Marital Status** | | | |
| Married | 50.42% | ----- | ----- |
| Domestic Partnership | 1.00% | ----- | ----- |
| Separated/Divorced | 11.80% | ----- | ----- |
| Widowed | 6.28% | ----- | ----- |
| Never Married | 30.57% | ----- | ----- |
| Dated Member of Another Race/Ethnicity | 45.98% | ----- | |
| Number of Children | 1.74 | 1.67 | 0-8 |
| Child Have Problems if Mother Works | 33.10% | ----- | ----- |
| Same-Sex Marriage Equality | 46.59% | ----- | ----- |
| Female | 53.03% | ----- | ----- |
| Age | 44.70 | 18.24 | 18-94 |
| College or Higher | 38.85% | ----- | ----- |
| Close Friends of Different Races | 2.10 | 0.96 | 0-3 |
| Interview Conducted in Other Language | 9.98% | ----- | ----- |
| Religious Importance | 2.56 | 0.69 | 1-3 |

**Table 2: Logistic Regression of Marriage (N = 1,305)**

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Race/Ethnicity[a] | | | | | | |
| *African-American* | 0.55** | (0.11) | 0.55** | (0.11) | 0.56* | (0.13) |
| *Latino* | 0.66^ | (0.14) | 0.64* | (0.14) | 0.91 | (0.22) |
| *Latino Immigrant* | 1.38 | (0.41) | 1.36 | (0.45) | 1.71 | (0.59) |
| *Asian* | 0.45** | (0.12) | 0.42** | (0.12) | 0.47** | (0.18) |
| *Asian Immigrant* | 1.56^ | (0.36) | 1.52^ | (0.38) | 1.45 | (0.37) |
| Close Friends of Different Races | | | 1.10 | (0.09) | 1.08 | (0.09) |
| Interview in Other Language | | | 1.01 | (0.32) | 1.08 | (0.36) |
| Female | | | | | 1.09 | (0.17) |
| Age | | | | | 1.02*** | (0.00) |
| Attended College or More | | | | | 2.17*** | (0.33) |
| Religious Importance | | | | | 1.26* | (0.15) |
| **Pseudo R2** | 0.02 | | 0.02 | | 0.07 | |

*Odds Ratios, Standard Errors in Parentheses*
^$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.
[a] Reference category is "White"

**Table 3: Logistic Regression of Date Someone of Another Race/Ethnicity (N = 1,305)**

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Race/Ethnicity[a] | | | | | | |
| *African-American* | 1.57* | (0.35) | 1.56* | (0.35) | 1.89** | (0.47) |
| *Latino* | 2.86*** | (0.65) | 2.81*** | (0.65) | 2.56*** | (0.64) |
| *Latino Immigrant* | 1.25 | (0.37) | 1.71 | (0.56) | 1.78 | (0.65) |
| *Asian* | 3.77*** | (1.07) | 3.54*** | (1.04) | 3.00*** | (0.98) |
| *Asian Immigrant* | 1.02 | (0.25) | 1.15 | (0.30) | 0.98 | (0.27) |
| Close Friends of Different Races | | | 1. 23** | (0.10) | 1.21* | (0.10) |
| Interview in Other Language | | | 0.54^ | (0.17) | 0.53^ | (0.19) |
| Female | | | | | 0.73* | (0.12) |
| Age | | | | | 0.97*** | (0.00) |
| Attended College or More | | | | | 1.36^ | (0.22) |
| Religious Importance | | | | | 0.72** | (0.09) |
| **Pseudo R2** | 0.03 | | 0.05 | | 0.10 | |

*Odds Ratios, Standard Errors in Parentheses*
^$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.
[a] Reference category is "White"

**Table 4: Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Number of Children (N = 1,305)**

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Race/Ethnicity[a] | | | | | | |
| *African-American* | 0.59*** | (0.18) | 0.59*** | (0.18) | 0.75*** | (0.17) |
| *Latino* | -0.18 | (0.17) | -0.15 | (0.17) | 0.38** | (0.15) |
| *Latino Immigrant* | 0.45* | (0.23) | 0.56* | (0.26) | 0.60** | (0.22) |
| *Asian* | -0.47* | (0.21) | -0.40^ | (0.21) | 0.37* | (0.17) |
| *Asian Immigrant* | -0.16 | (0.16) | -0.09 | (0.18) | 0.13 | (0.14) |
| Close Friends of Different Races | | | -0.07 | (0.07) | -0.06 | (0.05) |
| Interview in Other Language | | | -0.18 | (0.23) | -0.18 | (0.19) |
| Marital Status[b] | | | | | | |
| *Domestic Partner* | | | | | -1.05*** | (0.28) |
| S*eparated/Divorced* | | | | | -0.32^ | (0.18) |
| *Widowed* | | | | | -0.52 | (0.33) |
| *Never Married* | | | | | -1.35*** | (0.13) |
| Female | | | | | 0.27** | (0.10) |
| Age | | | | | 0.03*** | (0.00) |
| Attended College or More | | | | | -0.20* | (0.10) |
| Religious Importance | | | | | 0.13^ | (0.07) |
| Constant | 1.61*** | (0.13) | 2.16*** | (0.17) | 0.27 | (0.29) |
| **R2** | 0.04 | | 0.04 | | 0.38 | |

*Unstandardized Coefficients, Standard Errors in Parentheses*
^$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.
[a] Reference category is "White"
[b] Reference category is "Married"

**Table 5: Logistic Regression of Attitudes Toward Working Mothers (N = 1,305)**

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Race/Ethnicity[a] | | | | | | |
| *African-American* | 0.85 | (0.20) | 0.85 | (0.19) | 0.79 | (0.19) |
| *Latino* | 1.01 | (0.23) | 0.96 | (0.23) | 1.08 | (0.27) |
| *Latino Immigrant* | 2.95*** | (0.87) | 2.29* | (0.75) | 2.25* | (0.76) |
| *Asian* | 1.12 | (0.32) | 1.00 | (0.30) | 1.21 | (0.39) |
| *Asian Immigrant* | 1.91** | (0.45) | 1.66* | (0.42) | 2.05** | (0.55) |
| Close Friends of Different Races | | | 1.06 | (0.09) | 1.09 | (0.09) |
| Interview in Other Language | | | 1.58 | (0.51) | 1.60 | (0.52) |
| Marital Status[b] | | | | | | |
| *Domestic Partner* | | | | | 0.91 | (0.75) |
| S*eparated/Divorced* | | | | | 1.17 | (0.30) |
| *Widowed* | | | | | 1.90^ | (0.68) |
| *Never Married* | | | | | 0.90 | (0.23) |
| Number of Children | | | | | 1.06 | (0.06) |
| Female | | | | | 0.94 | (0.15) |
| Age | | | | | 1.01 | (0.01) |
| Attended College or More | | | | | 0.74^ | (0.12) |
| Religious Importance | | | | | 1.11 | (0.14) |
| **Pseudo R2** | 0.03 | | 0.03 | | 0.05 | |

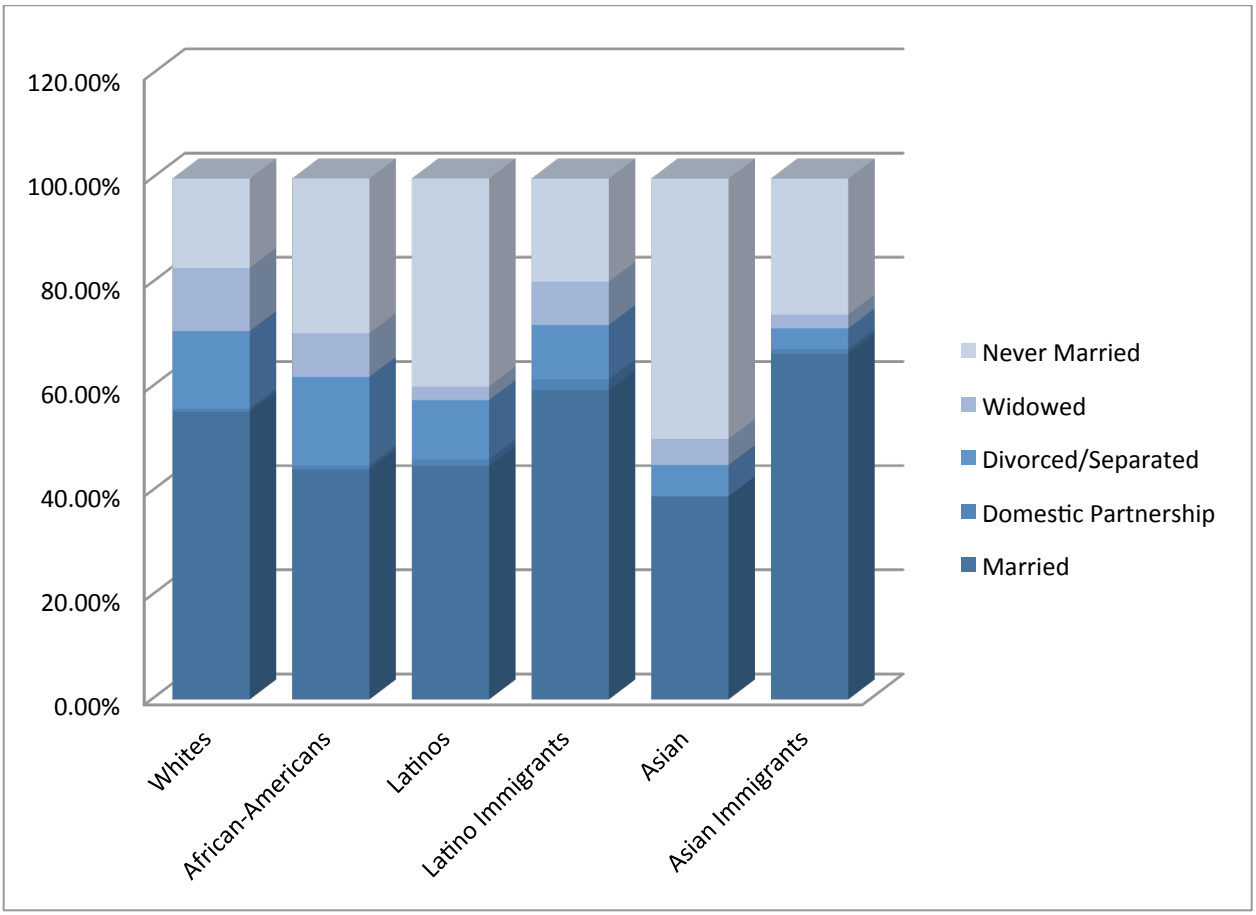
*Odds Ratios, Standard Errors in Parentheses*
^$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.
[a] Reference category is "White"
[b] Reference category is "Married"

**Table 6: Logistic Regression of Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Marriage (N = 1,305)**

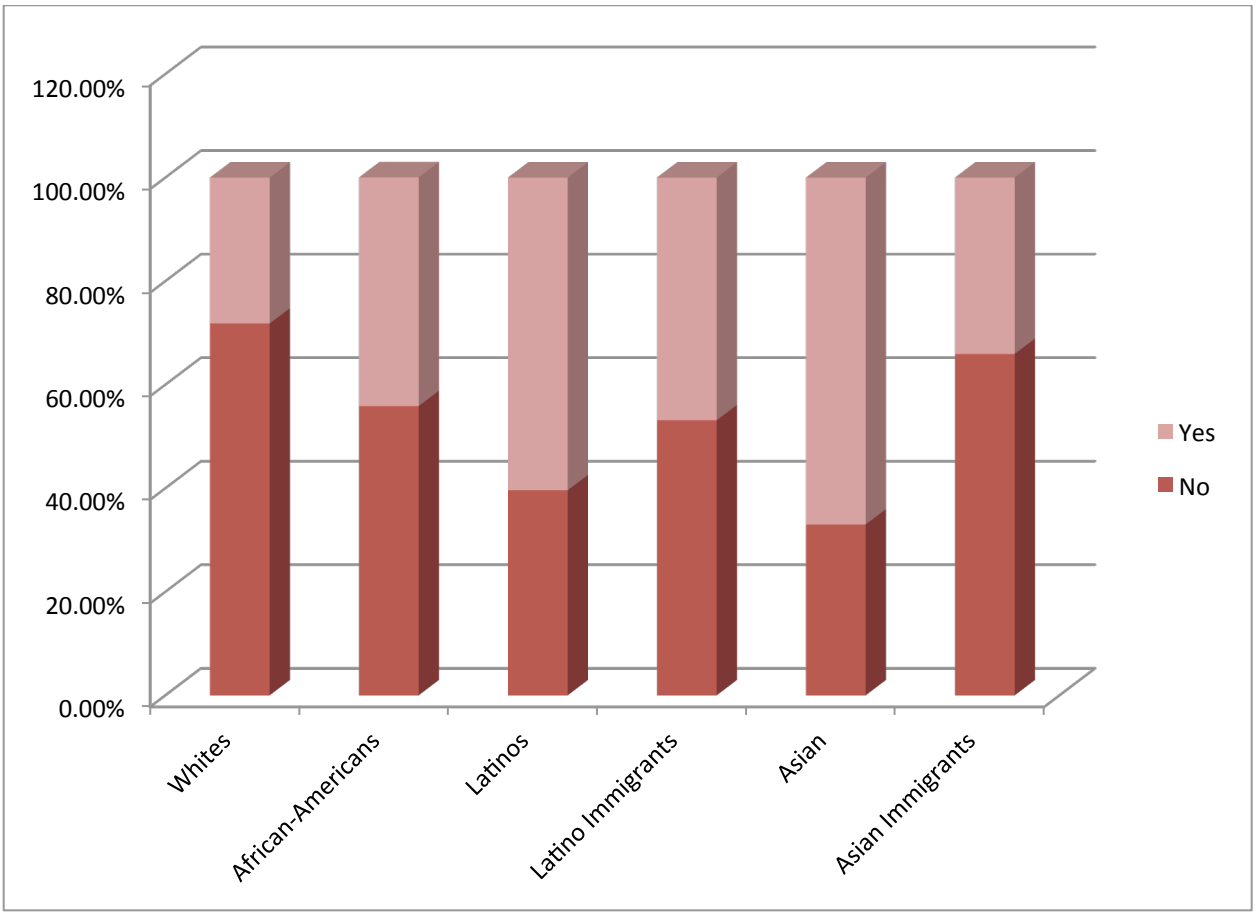
| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Race/Ethnicity[a] | | | | | | |
| *African-American* | 0.72 | (0.16) | 0.72 | (0.16) | 0.76 | (0.18) |
| *Latino* | 1.99** | (0.43) | 2.06*** | (0.44) | 1.62* | (0.39) |
| *Latino Immigrant* | 1.34 | (0.40) | 1.67 | (0.53) | 1.68 | (0.55) |
| *Asian* | 1.86* | (0.50) | 2.01* | (0.56) | 1.47 | (0.43) |
| *Asian Immigrant* | 1.25 | (0.28) | 1.39 | (0.34) | 1.21 | (0.31) |
| Close Friends of Different Races | | | 0.97 | (0.08) | 0.98 | (0.08) |
| Interview in Other Language | | | 0.70 | (0.22) | 0.67 | (0.22) |
| Marital Status[b] | | | | | | |
| *Domestic Partner* | | | | | 3.67^ | (2.89) |
| S*eparated/Divorced* | | | | | 1.60^ | (0.43) |
| *Widowed* | | | | | 2.22* | (0.76) |
| *Never Married* | | | | | 1.57^ | (0.38) |
| Number of Children | | | | | 1.05 | (0.06) |
| Female | | | | | 1.60** | (0.26) |
| Age | | | | | 0.97*** | (0.01) |
| Attended College or More | | | | | 1.28 | (0.20) |
| Religious Importance | | | | | 0.51*** | (0.07) |
| **Pseudo R2** | 0.03 | | 0.03 | | 0.11 | |

*Odds Ratios, Standard Errors in Parentheses*
^$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.
[a] Reference category is "White"
[b] Reference category is "Married"

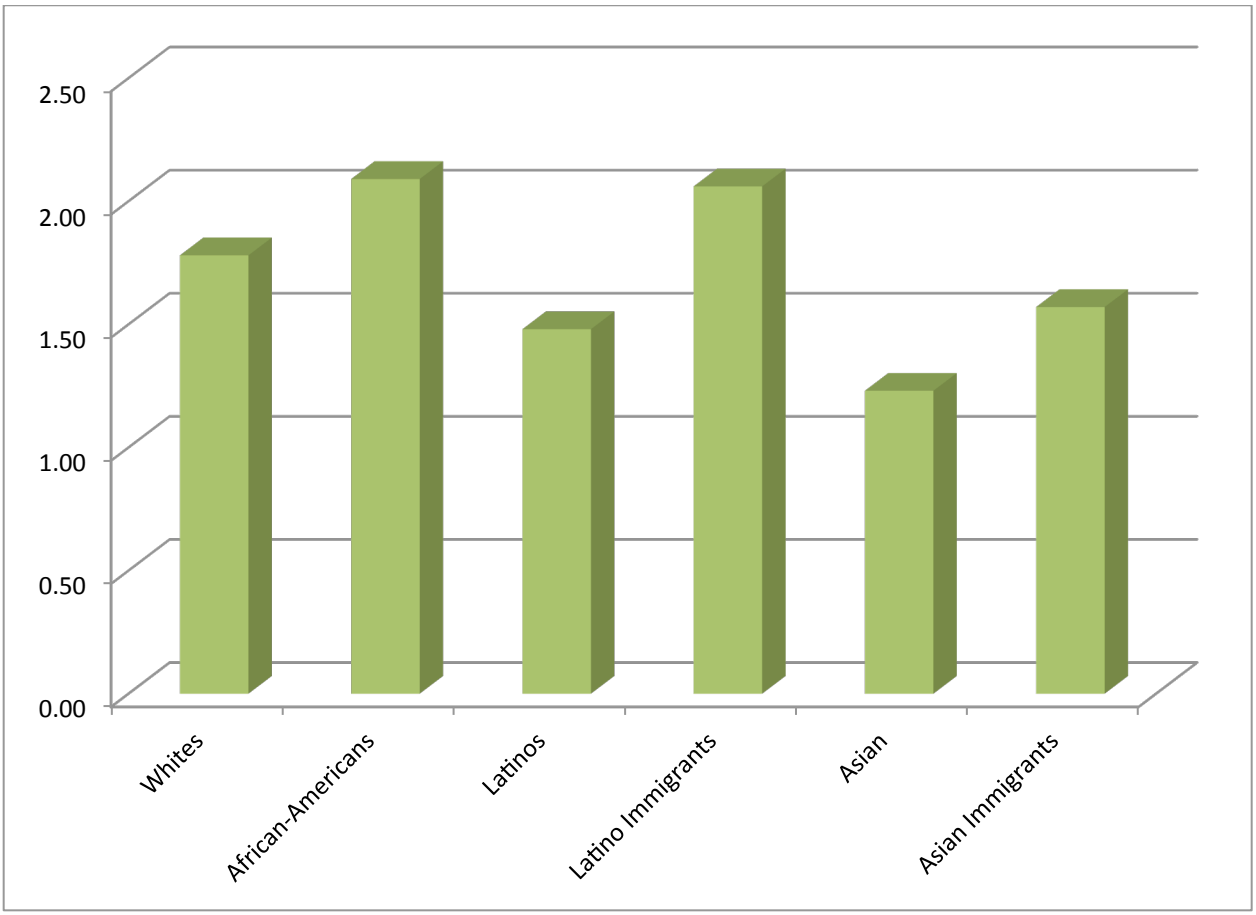
**Graph 1. Marital Status by Race/Ethnicity (N=1,305)**



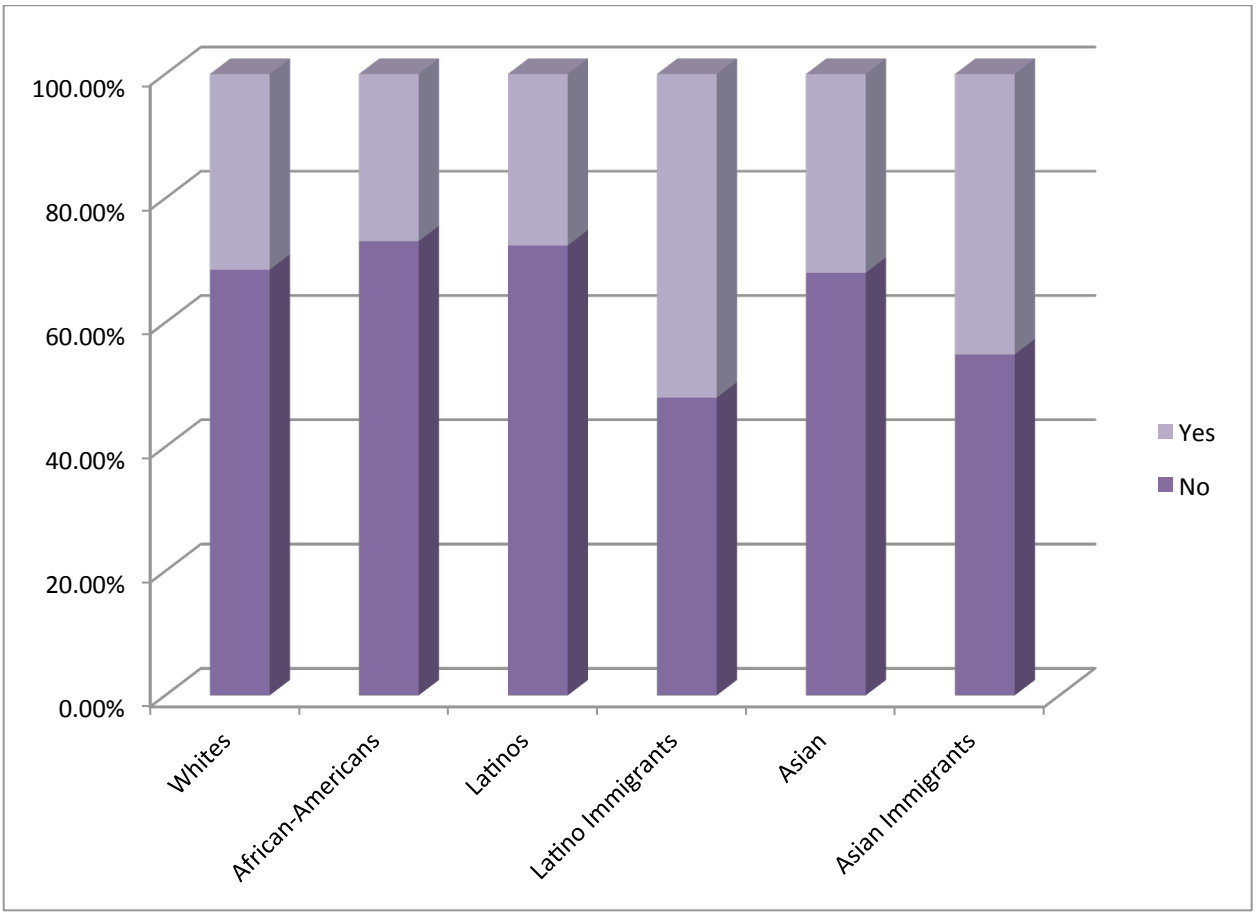
**Graph 2. Dated Someone of a Different Race by Race/Ethnicity (N=1,305)**



**Graph 3. Mean Number of Children by Race/Ethnicity (N=1,305)**



**Graph 4. Child Will Have Problems if Mother Works by Race/Ethnicity (N=1,305)**



**Graph 5: In Favor of Same-Sex Marriage Equality by Race/Ethnicity (N=1,305)**