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Intermarriage among New Immigrants in the USA

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Abstract

The study uses the New Immigrant Survey data collected in 2003 to fill a void in the existing literature on the regional variations in exogamy among the new first generation immigrants in the United States. It further improves on some methodological issues in existing studies. Our empirical results show that immigrants from different regions of origin indeed vary significantly in their choice of spouse, even after controlling for other important predictors of exogamy. Latino females are the most exogamous of all groups while Latino males as well are more exogamous than their Asian male counterparts and do not differ much from male immigrants from Europe, Central Asia and the residual “other” category. The results are somewhat counterintuitive given the history of European immigration to the US, and the higher level of structural assimilation attained by Asians in the US compared to Latinos. The contradictory results therefore, point towards a rapid assimilation of Latin Americans into the US society. On the other hand, first generation Asians demonstrated the lowest level of all types of exogamy in general, except Asian women were not the most endogamous compared to Europeans, Central Asians and “other” residual category. The finding, once again is inconsistent with the history of European immigration. Finally, although Latinos are more exogamous, they preferred a Hispanic spouse than a non-Hispanic, which could be attributed to the common Spanish language shared by them. In contrast, lack of a common language among Asians might be contributing to their lowest intermarriage rate with other Asians, irrespective of gender.

INTRODUCTION

The classical theory of assimilation developed by sociologists of the Chicago School (Park and Burgess 1921) and later formalized by Gordon (1964) viewed intermarriage between people of immigrant and native origins as the litmus test of assimilation, blurring group boundaries by producing children with mixed backgrounds, which in turn diluted the meaning of ethnicity (see Perlmann and Waters 2004; Perlmann and Waters 2007). According to Gordon’s (1964) statement of classical assimilation theory, structural assimilation--the entry of a minority group into the mainstream labor market and the attainment of an occupational status comparable to that of the majority--would be followed inevitably by marital assimilation. Historical evidence, however, indicates that structural assimilation and intermarriage do not always proceed in a neat linear sequence.

The descendants of Jewish immigrants to the United States, for example, achieved a high degree of economic mobility and acculturation but did not immediately display high rates of out-marriage to non-Jewish natives, which came later. Likewise, Asians in Britain today exhibit low rates of exogamy despite having attained significant level of socioeconomic

assimilation (Muttarak and Heath 2010). Some groups, such as the descendants of African slaves and black immigrants to the United States, maintain high rates of endogamy after generations of U.S. residence (Gullickson 2006), prompting scholars to develop alternatives to what Gans (1992) calls the “straight line assimilation model.” The most prominent of these alternative models is the theory of segmented assimilation, which posits that immigrants follow different trajectories of assimilation depending on their characteristics and the context of reception they experience (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes 1995). According to this theory, we may not only observe intermarriage with majority whites in the United States, but also with other racial/ethnic groups. With the exception of Qian et al. (2012), however, previous studies have paid little attention to alternative paths of marital assimilation.

Many new immigrants to the United States arrive without spouses and are not only free to marry native majority group members, but also to other immigrants or native minorities. The availability of large numbers of unmarried immigrants renders intermarriage to other foreigners especially likely, given that structural assimilation has had little time to occur. In this paper we explore the process of marital assimilation by distinguishing between two kinds of intermarriage: unions between immigrants and native born majority members and unions between immigrants and other foreign born persons or native minorities. We argue that some immigrant groups evince lower rates of intermarriage to the native-born majority owing to their exclusion from mainstream society, even if they do not undertake within-country endogamy.

In this analysis we examine newly arrived immigrants to the United States and consider patterns of intermarriage among persons born in Asia and Latin America, the two largest and fastest growing immigrant groups, compared with immigrants from Europe. We seek to test whether intermarriage inevitably follows structural assimilation, as hypothesized by classical theories of assimilation, or whether the theory of segmented assimilation offers a plausible alternative explanation for departures from the predictions of classical theory. In doing so, we make several contributions to the existing literature on intermarriage. First, we add to the few existing studies of intermarriage among first generation immigrants, as most work has focused on marital associations in the second generation, or on rates and patterns of intermarriage between and among broad racial-ethnic groups, such as Hispanics (Anderson and Saenz 1994; Qian and Cobas 2004), Asians (Lee and Yamanaka 1990; Hwang, Saenz, and Aguirre 1997; Qian, Blair, and Ruf 2001; Fu, and Hatfield 2008) and African Americans (Batson, Qian and Lichter 2006).

Second, we seek to overcome data limitations that have hindered prior studies of immigrant marital behavior. Most censuses and surveys do not gather information on the date and place of marriage, making it impossible to know whether a union occurred before or after arrival in the receiving country (see Hwang and Saenz 1990). The 1980 census was the last U.S. Census to include age at first marriage, thereby enabling the identification of immigrants who were married prior to immigration (Chiswick and Houseworth 2008). As a result, in the few U.S. studies of intermarriage among the foreign born, samples have been restricted to those who immigrated before adulthood in an attempt to exclude marriages contracted

overseas before migration (see Kalmijn and Tubergen 2010, and Qian and Lichter 2001, and Qian et al. 2012).

Finally, we seek to add greater richness to the list of explanatory factors considered as determinants of intermarriage. Although registries yield information on the date of marriage, they generally contain little detail socioeconomic background characteristics, and nothing on immigration status. Population registries, for example, exclude information on marriages contracted abroad after an individual has settled in the host country. In many groups, immigrants return to the origin country to find spouses after settling abroad. In their analyses, Muttarak and Heath (2010) and Safi (2008) were forced to exclude all marriages conducted abroad rather than just excluding all marriages conducted before immigrant's first arrival in the host country. Other studies also have excluded marriages contracted abroad regardless of whether the marriage occurred before or after migration (Hwang and Saenz 1990; Qian and Cobas 2004). Our data set allows us to exclude only those immigrants who were married to their current spouse before first arrival in the United States while retaining all current marriages contracted after first arrival regardless of where they took place.

PRIOR RESEARCH ON IMMIGRANT INTERMARRIAGE

As already noted, relatively few studies have examined exogamy among the foreign-born. Using 2000 U.S. census data for migrants from Puerto Rico, Mexico, China, and Philippines, Qian et al. (2012) examined differences in intermarriage and cohabitation with non-Hispanic whites, other minorities, and pan-ethnic groups such as Latinos and Asians. They found that within-group endogamy was strong; but they also found clear patterns of pan-ethnic marriage as well as intermarriage with whites, prompting them to conclude that although “unions with whites remain a major path of integration... other paths of integration also become viable options for all ethnic groups” (p.651). In their analysis of marriage choices among 94 national origin groups in the United States, Kalmijn and Tubergen (2010) noted large differences in rates of endogamy across groups. Although both structural and cultural factors influenced the likelihood of intermarriage, cultural factors (those related to roles and preferences) generally carried more weight. Even after controlling for structural and cultural factors, however, some groups experienced higher rates of endogamy than expected (Indians) whereas other groups experienced lower rates (Mexicans and Guatemalans).

Turning to Europe, Tubergen and Maas (2007) used the 1971 Dutch Census to study marital patterns among first generation immigrants within the Netherlands. They found that endogamy was higher among immigrant groups that were large, had a more balanced sex ratio, and were more spatially segregated. Exogamy was lower for individuals who did not speak the host language well, had lower levels of education, and were nonwhite. Safi (2008), meanwhile, used longitudinal data to compare intermarriage rates for different immigrant groups in France and discovered that structural integration did not necessarily predict marital assimilation after controlling for sex ratios, group size, and spatial segregation. Whereas North Africans displayed a persistent lack of integration in the labor market, they evinced a high likelihood of intermarriage. In contrast, Portuguese and Asian immigrants were strongly integrated into the labor market but displayed low rates of intermarriage. In their of

data from the United Kingdom, Muttarak and Heath (2010) found that rates of exogamy rose for all groups as generations increased, as well as with time spent in the country, rising socioeconomic status, and growing residential integration. Strong intergroup differences nonetheless remained after controlling for these effects, with Pakistanis and Bangladeshis displaying much higher rates of endogamy compared with other groups such as Black British.

Research suggests there is not a single “Asian” pattern of marital assimilation. Whereas some studies conclude that Asians display lower rates of exogamy than other groups (Hwang et al. 1997; Muttarak and Heath 2010), others find a diversity of Asian patterns. In their analysis of 2000 Census data from the United States, for example, Fu and Hatfield (2008) found that native-born Asians displayed two distinct patterns of marriage. Whereas the Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Indians tended to be endogamous and resist intermarriage even after achieving structural assimilation, Filipinos displayed high rates of exogamy and seemed to follow the path of marital assimilation established by earlier European immigrants. Qian et al. (2012) found a similar contrast between Chinese and Filipinos, net of background controls.

PROPOSED HYPOTHESES

The foregoing studies identify a number of factors associated with intergroup variation in exogamy, including race (Qian and Cobas 2004), skin color (Qian 2005), national origin (Qian et al. 2012; Kalmijn and Tubergen 2010) and human capital (Furtado 2012; Duncan and Trejo 2007), especially education (Kalmijn 1998; Lieberman and Waters 1988; Qian and Lichter 2007; Qian 1997; Chiswick and Houseworth 2008; Qian et al. 2012), language ability (Kalmijn and Tubergen 2010; Tubergen and Maas 2007), and time spent in the host society (Chiswick and Houseworth 2008). The propensity to intermarry also varies by age (Kulzycki and Lobo 2002), gender (Tubergen and Maas 2007), and religion (Alba and Golden 1986; Kalmijn 1998; Kalmijn and Tubergen 2010), as well as by contextual factors such as group size ((Blau, Blum and Schwartz 1982; Tubergen and Maas 2007; Lieberman and Waters 1988; Safi 2008; Kalmijn 1998; Hwang et al. 1994; Kalmijn and Tubergen 2010; Fu and Hatfield 2008) and degree of spatial segregation (Muttarak and Heath 2010; Tubergen and Maas 2007; Kalmijn and Tubergen 2010).

To the extent that classical assimilation theory remains relevant in explaining intermarriage patterns among contemporary immigrants to the United States, then, in our analysis of newly arrived migrants we expect the likelihood of intermarriage to increase with rising education, English language ability, and time spent in the United States and to decline with group size. Given the long history of European immigration to the United States and the current prevalence of white European origins in the U.S. population, we expect European immigrants to display the highest likelihood of intermarriage with natives, other things equal. Moreover, given the fact that the United States remains overwhelmingly Christian in terms of religious preference, and most majority members strongly identify with a Judeo-Christian cultural tradition, we expect Christian immigrants to be the most likely to intermarry followed by Jews.

American society continues to be racially and ethnically stratified racially and we also expect segmented assimilation theory to be relevant in explaining the propensity to intermarry. We thus hypothesize that the likelihood of intermarriage decreases as skin color darkens and is lower for immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean than among immigrants from Europe, with Asians falling in-between. Given the heightened xenophobia and fear prompted by Islamic terrorism, we expect Muslims to display the lowest likelihood of intermarriage among major religions. Unfortunately owing to small numbers in our analysis we had to group Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists into a single category, which we hypothesize to display the lowest rate of intermarriage of those religious categories considered in our analysis. Although prior research identifies spatial segregation as a key factor promoting segmented assimilation, we do not have the neighborhood data necessary to test this proposition. The smallest unit of geography is the state and we expect the odds of intermarriage to decline with the size of a state's same-group immigrant population.

Following segmented assimilation theory, to the extent that prejudice and discrimination have arisen against foreigners in recent years, we expect to observe a tendency toward pan-ethnic endogamy. In other words, we expect to observe higher likelihoods of marriage between Mexicans and other Latin Americans and between Chinese and other Asians than one would expect to observe on the basis of chance. Finally, we consider one potential influence on the likelihood of intermarriage that has not yet been considered in prior work: visa type (Jasso 2011). In the United States, as elsewhere, there are many different legal categories through which immigrants can gain access to permanent resident status. In most cases the fastest track is through marriage to a host country citizen. If some foreign nationals are indeed motivated to marry native citizens to attain permanent residence, then others who obtain their visas through different pathways (such as employment, family reunification, refugee, asylee) should be less likely to marry exogamously. In our models we therefore introduce indicators of the visa category under which an immigrant qualified for permanent residence.

DATA AND METHODS

Our analysis is based on data from the first wave of the New Immigrant Survey (NIS), which drew on electronic administrative records compiled by federal authorities to create a nationally representative sample of immigrants who were admitted to lawful permanent resident status between May 2003 and November 2003. The sample is restricted to adults who were at least 18 years old at the time of admission to Legal Permanent Resident (LPR) status, who were surveyed with a response rate of 69 percent. We limit our sample to currently married immigrants, thus excluding marriages that did not survive because of divorce or death. Using information on the date and place of marriage, we also exclude migrants who were married to their current spouse before their first arrival in the United States. However, as long as immigrants were married to their current spouse after their first arrival, we include those marriages that were contracted abroad.

We limit our analysis to immigrants from Asia, Latin America and Europe and Central Asia, which yields 5,096 currently married immigrants, 17 percent (885) of whom were missing information on time spent in the U.S., which is a crucial variable in the analysis. After

excluding these observations as well as respondents who married before first entering the United States 1,464 cases remained. Case-wise deletion for other missing variables reduced the final sample is 1269 (and 1,208 for Model 2-see below) with relatively equal shares of males (52 percent) and females (48 percent). When interpreting results, it is important to keep in mind the limitations of the sample, which only includes legal permanent residents and therefore excludes temporary workers, undocumented migrants, students, and other foreigners commonly present in the United States. Furthermore, being new immigrants, respondents have spent relatively little time in the United States, limiting their exposure to the U.S. marriage market. However, because the large majority of respondents report time in the United States prior to receipt of permanent residence, there is more variation in exposure to the U.S. marriage market than one might think, with the average duration of exposure being around 4.8 years.

Our review of prior research suggests that one cannot assess the degree of integration into U.S. society by considering endogamy alone. Instead, careful attention must be paid to *which* out-groups are chosen for potential marital partners. Gurak and Fitzpatrick (1982) found that when Hispanics marry outside their national origin, they more often chose another Hispanic nationality for a spouse than a non-Hispanic white. In contrast, those Asian-Americans who are exogamous tend to marry whites and rarely marry other Asian subgroups (Lee and Yamanaka 1990). It is therefore important to consider different options for exogamy.

Here we estimate multinomial models using three different outcome configurations. Model 1 considers the likelihood of marrying a U.S. native versus marrying an immigrant from a different country compared with the odds of marrying within one's own immigrant group (the reference category). Model 2 considers the odds of marrying a U.S. born *white* spouse versus marrying another immigrant nationality or a native nonwhite minority member compared with the likelihood marrying an immigrant from one's own group. Finally, Model 3 considers the likelihood of marrying a spouse born in a different country but the same region versus someone born in a different region compared with the likelihood of marrying within one's own immigrant group.

The first model tests classical assimilation theory by assessing whether immigrants are indeed marrying members of the host country while the second and third examine propositions derived from segmented assimilation theory. The second model tests considers whether immigrants are marrying other foreigners or native minorities rather than native whites, and the third model assesses whether we observe any tendency for immigrants to marry pan-ethnically by selecting mates from the different countries in their region of origin (e.g. Latin America, Asia, or Europe). In all cases, the reference category is an endogamous marriage to someone born in the same country as the immigrant in question. In predicting the nature and likelihood of exogamy, our leading explanatory variables are indicators of skin color, human capital, and group size. Skin color is measured using an interviewer-assigned scale that ranges from 1 (lightest) to 11 (darkest). A value of 0 is assigned to the 41 percent of respondents who were missing a scale value for skin color (those interviewed by phone) and missing skin color data was indicated by a dummy variable.

To measure human capital, we include continuous measures of years of schooling completed both by immigrants and their spouses along with a measure of immigrant's years of schooling in the United States, if any. English language ability is measured using a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 if the respondent reports speaking English "well" or "very well" and 0 if they spoke English "not well" or "not at all." We assess the opportunity for endogamy by including the log of the number of same-nationality immigrants in the respondent's state of residence and the log of the number of immigrants from the same region of origin. We further estimate opportunity for endogamy by including time spent in the host society as the number of years the immigrant lived in the United States before marrying the current spouse. As a measure of host country experience, it is also an indicator of human capital.

For demographic controls we include the total number of times the immigrant has been married, the age of marriage to the current spouse, and gender. Region is measured by dummy variables indicating birth in Latin America, Asia or the Pacific, and Europe or Central Asia. Five dummy variables are used to capture religious affiliation: Catholic, Orthodox Christian, Protestant, Muslim, Buddhist or Hindu, and Jews or other religious groups, with no religion serving as the reference category. Finally, the visa category through which immigrants attained permanent residence status is assessed using four dummy variables: spouse of legal permanent residents or U.S. citizens, employment, diversity, legalization, and a combined category of consisting of parents, children, and parents of U.S. citizens together with refugees, asylees, and parolees. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for independent variables used in the analysis. In the entire sample of currently married immigrants, 33.6 percent were born in Asia (the countries of East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific), 53.7 percent came from Latin America or the Caribbean, and 12.7 percent were from Europe or Central Asia.

In the pooled sample, 40.8 percent of respondents were missing a value for skin color. Those who were assigned a color rating tended to be relatively light-skinned, with an average scale value of about 3. Immigrants and their spouses display comparable levels of education, with an average of approximately 14 years of schooling each, with an average of just 1.25 years of education completed in the United States. In the entire sample, 63.5 percent of immigrants spoke English well or very well. The average of the log of immigrant group size was around 3.9 for country of origin and 5.2 for region of origin. Immigrants spent an average of 4.9 years in the United States prior to marriage. The average number of marriages was 1.13 and the mean age of marriage to the current spouse was 29.2 years. In terms of gender, females comprised 47.9 percent of the sample and religious affiliation was dominated by Christians, with 47.3 percent being Catholic, 6.7 percent Orthodox Christian, and 11.7 percent Protestant. Only 13 percent were Hindu while 11 percent professed no religion. Adherents to the remaining religions fluctuated around 3 percent each, with Muslims coming in at 3.7 percent, Buddhists at 3.4 percent, and Jews and other religions at 3.2 percent. By far the largest visa category was spouse of a citizen or permanent resident, followed by employment visas (28.4 percent), legalization visas (15.8 percent), diversity visas (3.3 percent) and other visas (7 percent).

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics for each region of origin. A relatively high proportion of Asians and Europeans were missing the skin color rating (56 percent and 52.2 percent, respectively) whereas only 28.6 percent of Latinos were missing this indicator. Among those who were assigned a skin color rating, Latinos tended to be the darkest with an average scale value of about 3.7 while Europeans were the lightest at 1.5 and Asians in the middle at 2.2. Immigrants from each of the regions have levels of education that are roughly comparable with those of their spouses, but the level of education varied by region, with Asians being highest at 16.5 years of schooling. Latinos were the lowest with 11.3 years of schooling and Europeans were in the middle with around 15.5 years of education. Immigrants from Asia and Europe both reported around 1.5 years of U.S. education, on average, compared with only 1.1 years for Latin Americans. Asians reported the largest share of respondents who spoke English well or very well at 86.7 percent, closely followed by Europeans at 84 percent; and Latin Americans were lowest at 44.2 percent.

The average of the log of immigrant group size for both country and region of origin was highest for Latin Americans at 4.3 and 5.7, respectively, while the numbers were similar for the other two groups: around 3.4 and 4.8 for Asians and 3.3 and 4.2 for Europeans. Asian immigrants spent only an average of 3.6 years in the United States prior to marriage while Latinos spent 5.9 years and Europeans were in the middle at 4.3 years. The average number of marriages was very similar for all three groups: 1.1 for Asians, 1.2 for Europeans and 1.2 for Latinos. Likewise, the mean age at marriage for the sample in all three groups was very similar at around 29 years. There was an underrepresentation of females among Asian migrants at just 41.5 percent, but there were more female Europeans (55 percent) and an equal proportion of males and females among immigrant Latin Americans (50 percent).

As for the religious affiliation of the immigrant groups, a very high proportion of Latin Americans were Christians (91 percent) with around 73 percent being Catholic. Similarly, around 67 percent of Europeans were Christians with 30.4 percent being Catholic; just 12 percent were Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist. In contrast, among migrants from Asia most were Hindus, Muslims or Buddhists (55 percent taken together together) and Hindus alone constituted 38.4 percent, compared with around 25.5 percent who were Christian. There were significant variations across regions in terms of visa category. Most immigrants from Asia attained permanent residence through an employment visa (62.3 percent), compared with only 18.6 percent among Europeans and 9.4 percent among Latin Americans. Among the latter, a very high proportion (52.1 percent) entered with a spousal visa, and another 29.2 percent were former undocumented migrants who gained permanent resident status through legalization. The corresponding shares for Asians were much lower, with 31.4 percent gaining permanent residence through a spouse and a mere 0.2 percent through legalization. Europeans, on the other hand, displayed many fewer respondents gaining permanent residence through employment visas; most (54.7 percent) entered as the spouse of a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. A significant minority of Europeans attained legal status using a diversity visa (20.5 percent). Among other groups, very few gained legal status through this category.

RATES AND PATTERNS OF INTERMARRIAGE

Table 3 summarizes intermarriage rates among immigrants by region of birth by showing the distribution of cases for the outcomes associated with each of the three models defined above. The first three columns show outcomes for Model 1. As expected, the highest rate of intermarriage to U.S. natives occurs among immigrants from Europe and Central Asia (30.4 percent). Contrary to what we might expect given segmented assimilation theory and the racial hierarchies of the United States, immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean are second in the frequency of marriage to U.S. natives (25.1 percent), substantially ahead of those from East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific (13.4 percent). Latin Americans, however, were more likely than other groups to marry an immigrant from a different country (20.6 percent) than Europeans (15.5 percent); but both were well ahead of Asians (5.6 percent). In general, then, Asians display by far the highest rate endogamy at 81.0 percent whereas Latin Americans and Europeans are roughly equal at 54 percent. The main difference between them is that Europeans are more likely to marry U.S. natives whereas Latin Americans are more likely to marry other immigrants.

Model 2 reveals what happens when we define marital assimilation as marriage to a *white* U.S. native and group native minorities with other immigrants. Although the share of intermarriages drops when one shifts from considering all natives to focus on white natives alone, the basic pattern remains the same. As with U.S. natives generally, intermarriage to white natives is most likely among European immigrants (25.7 percent) followed by Latin Americans (18.2 percent) and Asians (8.6 percent). In shifting from all natives to white natives as the definition of marital assimilation, the share intermarried drops by 4.7 points among Europeans, 2.9 points among Latin Americans, and 5.1 points among Asians. Thus when they marry U.S. natives, Europeans and Asians appear slightly more likely than Latin Americans to choose minorities. These patterns do not offer strong evidence of segmented assimilation among Latino immigrants in the United States. They are just as exogamous as Europeans and less likely to marry minorities when they do intermarry.

Another possibility outcome consistent with segmented assimilation is a pattern of pan-ethnic intermarriage, where Latino immigrants marry other immigrants from Latin America and Asians marry other immigrants from Asia. The final columns of Table 3 test this proposition by showing outcomes associated with Model 3. Here we do find some evidence of segmentation in marriage patterns: almost all of Latin American out-marriages to different countries are to immigrants from elsewhere in Latin America. Model 3 shows that 19.2 percent of all marriages were to other immigrants from elsewhere in Latin America. In contrast, the share of within-region marriages was just 4.3 percent among Europeans and 3.3 percent among Asians.

Obviously, then, Latin American immigrants display the greatest proclivity toward pan-ethnic intermarriage, which is not surprising given the commonalities of language and culture across Latin American nations compared with the diversity of languages and cultures found across nations in Europe and Asia. If one were to consider within-region marriage as a form of “quasi endogamy,” then the picture changes somewhat. Although Asian immigrants remain the most insular with 84 percent marrying either a spouse from the same country or

another Asian, Latin Americans are not far behind with 74 percent marrying either an immigrant from the same country or from another Latin American nation. In contrast, only 58 percent of Europeans marry someone from their home country or another European nation. These results confirm the relative attractiveness of pan-national Latino identities noted by other investigators (Massey and Sanchez 2010).

DETERMINANTS OF INTERMARRIAGE

Table 4 presents multinomial logistic regression estimates predicting the outcomes associated with each of our three models. Model 1 offers a test of classical assimilation theory by looking at the determinants of intermarriage to a U.S.-born spouse as opposed to an immigrant from another country or one's own country (the reference category). We find little evidence for a segmented pattern of marital assimilation in these estimates. Skin color has no effect on the likelihood of intermarriage with a U.S. native and once background characteristics are controlled differences between Europeans, Asians, and Latin Americans disappear. Among our leading explanatory variables the principal predictors of intermarriage are those associated with classical assimilation theory and accessibility to ethnically similar spouses. Speaking English well or very well raises an immigrant's odds of marrying a U.S. native by a factor of 2.5 ($\exp[0.914]=2.494$) and each year spent in the United States increases the odds of marrying a native by around 5 percent ($\exp[0.0508]=1.052$). However, as the size of the population from the same region of origin increases, the odds of intermarriage to a native progressively drop by 30 percent for each point increase in the log of population size ($\exp[-0.356]=0.700$). The odds of marrying a U.S. native are also enhanced if the potential spouse is well-educated. Each year of a spouse's education increases the odds of intermarriage by 15 percent ($\exp[0.142]=1.153$).

Among control variables in the model, religion and visa category are most powerfully associated with the likelihood of marrying a U.S. native. As expected, the odds of intermarriage are greatest for those entering with a spousal visa. Entering in this category increases the odds of marrying a U.S. native by a whopping factor of 61.2 ($\exp[4.114]=61.190$) compared to someone entering with an employment visa. Undoubtedly many if not most of these people are entering the United States precisely to marry a U.S. citizen. However, the mixed category of parent, child, sibling of citizen and refugee, asylee, or parolee also displays an elevated likelihood of intermarriage, with the odds of marrying a native being around 7.6 times greater than among those with an employment visa ($\exp[2.022]=7.553$). Those entering with other non-family visas---diversity or legalization visas---display the same odds of intermarriage as those arriving with employment visas. With respect to religion, Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists, as expected, are least likely to marry a U.S. native. Compared with those professing no religious affiliation, the odds of marrying a native are around 72 percent lower ($\exp[-1.273]=0.280$). Surprisingly, however, the odds of intermarriage are also lower for Catholics and Protestants, whereas the odds for Jews and Orthodox Christians were about the same as among those with no religious affiliation, at least in statistical terms.

Turning to the column predicting the competing risk of marrying a spouse born in a different country, this form of intermarriage is most strongly determined by the explanatory variables

English language ability and spousal accessibility. Speaking English well or very well nearly doubles the odds of marrying an immigrant from another country ($\exp[0.668]=1.95$). Not surprisingly the odds are also increased by a larger population of immigrants from the other countries but the same region (by around 40 percent: $\exp[0.339]=1.404$) but are reduced by larger population of immigrants from the same country of origin (by around 21 percent: $\exp[-.237]=0.789$). The likelihood of marrying another immigrant does not vary by religion, but the odds of doing so are higher for those who have been married before as well as those entering with spousal or legalization visa. Asians stand out for their low likelihood of marrying other immigrants. Compared with Europeans or Latin Americans the likelihood of marrying another immigrant outside their group are 73 percent lower for Asians ($\exp[-1.301]=0.272$).

When we define the definition of marital assimilation to be intermarriage with native *white* Americans, the results change very little. Among the leading explanatory variables, the odds of intermarriage are still increased by speaking English well, years of spousal education, and years spent in the United States and decreased by exposure to a larger population of immigrants from the same region. As before, the odds of intermarriage are greater for those entering in family reunification visa categories, especially the spousal category. In this model, however, all Christian groups are significantly less likely than those with no religion to marry a native white person, though once again Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists are least likely to do so. When the focus is on native white Americans Asian are significantly less likely than other immigrants to intermarry. Compared with the other groups, they are 52 percent less likely to marry a white U.S. native ($\exp[-.742]=0.476$).

Finally, the estimates for Model 3 examine the degree to which immigrants are drawn toward pan-ethnic as opposed to same-country endogamy. As shown in the right-hand columns, marrying within the region is predicted by English language ability and mate accessibility as well as by number of marriages, religion, and visa category among the control variables. The odds of marrying within the region of origin are 75 percent greater among those immigrants who speak English well or very well and they rise by 64 percent with each point increase in the log of the size of the regional population ($\exp[0.492]=1.636$) but fall by 28 percent with each point increase in the log of the size of the home country population ($\exp[0-.324]=0.723$). The odds of marrying within one's native region are also greater for those with multiple marriages and those entering on a spousal or legalization visa but lower for Protestants than other religions. There are no differences in the odds of marrying another immigrant from the same region of origin between Asians, Latin Americans, and Europeans once the foregoing factors are taken into account.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The study has investigated differences in the determinants and likelihood of intermarriage among new immigrants to the United States from Asia, Latin America, and Europe. Our analysis was guided by hypotheses derived from the classical assimilation model and segmented assimilation theory and tested using data from the New Immigrant Survey, a representative sample of the entering cohort of legal immigrants who received permanent residence in 2003. From all entering immigrants we selected those who were unmarried at

the time of initial entry and considered marital assimilation from a variety of perspectives. Specifically, over a series of three models we explored the relative likelihood that newly arrived, unmarried immigrants would marry another immigrant from their home country; another immigrant from their home region; a U.S. native; or a white native-born American.

The rate of marital assimilation was little different whether we considered marriage to any U.S. native or a white U.S. native and the determinants of each outcome were basically identical. The vast majority of marriages of immigrants to native born citizens are thus to majority whites. In keeping with classical assimilation theory, the odds of intermarriage increased with English language ability and time spent in the United States. Although the likelihood of intermarriage was not related to the immigrant's education it was significantly related to the spouse's education and the two are highly correlated. The likelihood of marital assimilation, however defined, was reduced by access to mates from the same region of origin, as indicated by the number of Asian, Latin American, or European immigrants in the subject's state of residence but it was unaffected by skin tone. To the extent that marital assimilation is occurring among newly arrived immigrants, therefore, it does not appear to be channeled disproportionately toward native minorities nor does it depend on skin color, and in these ways do not support the propositions of segmented assimilation theory.

We do, however, find evidence of segmented marital assimilation in another sense among Latin Americans. Like immigrants from Asia or Europe, those from Latin America come from many different nations; but unlike immigrants from other regions they come from nations that substantially share a common language and culture, thus opening up a unique option for exogamy beyond marrying a native U.S. citizen. If they choose not to marry a native, they are not relegated to pairing up with an immigrant who speaks a different language and espouses a very different culture but can select someone within their own linguistic and cultural frame of reference. As a result, although Latin American and European immigrants share the same level of endogamy as defined by marriage to someone from the same country of origin (about 54 percent) and display quite similar rates of intermarriage to immigrants from other regions (around 25 percent for Latin Americans and 30 percent for Europeans) the immigrants that Latin Americans marry are almost entirely from the same region, whereas those that Europeans marry are generally not from Europe. When endogamy is defined as marriage within the same region, 74 percent of Latin American immigrants are endogamous compared with 58 percent of European immigrants; and like marital assimilation with U.S. natives, intermarriage to other immigrants from the same region is significantly predicted by English language ability, indicating that within-region endogamy constitutes a segmented third option apart from assimilation with Americans or exogamy with other immigrant groups, at least for Latin Americans.

The group that most stands in the analysis out are Asians, who display by far the highest rates of endogamy among new immigrants, with 81 percent marrying other immigrants from the same country and just 3 percent marrying other Asian immigrants and 13% marrying U.S. natives. The distinctiveness of Asians and their high rates of endogamy are reinforced by religion, as immigrants identifying themselves as Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists are much less likely to marry U.S. born spouses compared with those who profess no religious affiliation. Given the overwhelmingly Christian composition of mainstream America, this

outcome is to be expected from classical theories of assimilation which posit social and cultural distance to be a deterrent to intermarriage. However, we also found that Christian immigrants were less likely to marry U.S. natives than the religiously unaffiliated, contrary to what one would expect from classical assimilation theory. In contrast, Jews were just as likely to intermarry as those who did not identify religiously. Among new immigrants to the United States, therefore, atheists, agnostics, and Jews appear to be leading the way in marrying into the mainstream.

Most analyses of marital assimilation by immigrants have not considered the visa category under which the immigrant attained permanent residence, generally owing to a lack of data. Our study shows, however, that patterns of intermarriage are highly structured by visa category. Not surprisingly, those entering through family ties to U.S. citizens or legal residents are much more likely to marry native U.S. citizens, with spousal visas playing a determinative role. Many new immigrants who are single when they begin migrating encounter a spouse in the course of living, working, or visiting the United States and then are sponsored by that person for permanent residence. Others look to their home country for a mate and then sponsor them for a fiancé visa, which enables them to adjust status as permanent residents once the marriage has taken place. In other words, one should never forget that assimilation processes are filtered through a highly structured U.S. immigration system that itself shapes and constrains outcomes (Jasso 2011).

The foregoing detailed results yield several general conclusions about marital assimilation among new immigrants to the United States. First, Asian immigrants do not appear to be following either a path of classical or segmented assimilation, at least in the first generation. Asians are among the most structurally assimilated of all immigrants in American society, but contrary to the predictions of Gordon (1964) and others they display the lowest rates of intermarriage with U.S. natives and the highest likelihood of within-country endogamy. They also display no proclivity at all to intermarry either with native minorities or with Asian immigrants from other countries, consistent with the findings of Lee and Yamanaka (1990). Instead they seem to follow a pattern consistent with the Jewish model described by Peach (1980) and the dualistic pattern described by Hwang et al. (1997) and Mutarak and Heath (2010) whereby newly arrived Asian immigrants attain rapid socioeconomic assimilation but keep their ethnic and cultural distance by maintaining high rates of endogamy.

Second, new Latin American immigrants offer a mixed picture both theoretically and substantively. On the one hand, their rate of endogamy is the same as that observed among European immigrants indicating a very similar proclivity toward marital assimilation. In addition, contrary to the predictions of segmented assimilation theory they are no more likely than Europeans to marry native minorities and consistent with the precepts of classical assimilation theory the likelihood of intermarriage with native whites is strongly predicted by English language ability and time spent in the United States. On the other hand, although nation-specific endogamy is the same as Europeans, Latin American immigrants display a much higher likelihood of intermarriage to other immigrants from their region of origin. As Gurak and Fitzpatrick reported long ago, when marrying outside their nationality, Hispanics generally prefer a Hispanic spouse over a non-Hispanic partner. This tendency is ironically

associated with greater English language ability, in keeping with precepts of segmented assimilation theory.

In sum, contrary to what we predicted at the outset, when we order the three broad origins in terms of their pace and propensity toward marital assimilation with U.S. natives we find that European immigrants are first, Latin Americans are second, and Asians are third. In the first generation, at least, Asians are strongly resistant to intermarriage within the mainstream despite their relatively high degree of structural assimilation, in defiance of the classical model of assimilation. In contrast, Europeans are quite open to marital assimilation in keeping with their structural assimilation, as classical theory would predict. Latin Americans lie in-between these two extremes. On the one hand, they are no more disposed to marry within their nationality than Europeans, which suggests ongoing assimilation along classical lines. On the other hand, they are much more likely than either Asians or Europeans to marry immigrants from their own region of origin, people who likely speak the same language and share common cultural attributes, thus foreshadowing a path of segmented assimilation. Of course, the subjects of our study are only just arrived in the United States and whether the structural advantages of the Asians prevail to accelerate marital assimilation in the longer run remains to be seen. Likewise whether the tendency of Latin American immigrants toward a segmented pattern of marital assimilation persists over time and across the generations will be a key issue for future research.

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TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Immigrant's Region of Birth	Pooled		
	Min	Max	Mean
Explanatory Variables			
Skin color	0	11	2.937
Missing skin color	0	1	0.408
Years of education	1	33	13.664
Years educated in the US	0	14	1.254
Spouse's years of education	0	30	13.526
Speaks English Well or Very Well	0	1	0.635
Log of group size by country of origin ¹	0	6.389	3.896
Log of group size by region of origin ²	0	7.005	5.230
Years as unmarried in the US	0.003	31.855	4.915
Demographic Controls			
Number of marriages	1	4	1.132
Age at marriage	14	61	29.169
Female	0	1	0.479
Region of Birth			
East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific	0	1	0.336
Europe and Central Asia	0	1	0.127
Latin America and the Carribean	0	1	0.537
Religion			
Catholic	0	1	0.473
Orthodox Christian	0	1	0.067
Protestant	0	1	0.117
Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist	0	1	0.201
Muslim	0	1	0.037
Buddhist	0	1	0.034
Hindu	0	1	0.130
Jews and other religion	0	1	0.032
No religion	0	1	0.110
Visa Category			
Spouse of US citizen or Legal Permanent Resident	0	1	0.455
Employment Preferences	0	1	0.284
Diversity Immigrants	0	1	0.033
Legalization	0	1	0.158
Parent, child or siblings of US citizen,	0	1	0.070
Refugee/Asylee/Parolee or Other visa			
No. of observations		1269	

¹ Group size refers to number of people from immigrant's country of birth living in their state of residence

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²Group size refers to number of people from immigrant's region of birth living in their state of residence

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TABLE 2

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS BY REGION

Major Variables of Interest	East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific		Europe and Central Asia		Latin America and the Caribbean				
	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean			
Explanatory Variables									
Skin color	0	9	2.215	0	6	1.497	0	11	3.730
Missing skin color	0	1	0.560	0	1	0.522	0	1	0.286
Years of education	3	29	16.576	6	27	15.851	1	33	11.322
Years educated in the US	0	12	1.464	0	12	1.441	0	14	1.078
Spouse's years of education	0	30	16.452	0	27	15.385	0	26	11.251
Speaks English Well or Very Well	0	1	0.867	0	1	0.839	0	1	0.442
Log of group size by country of origin ¹	0	5.328	3.421	0	5.043	3.324	0	6.389	4.329
Log of group size by region of origin ²	1.609	6.669	4.846	0	5.561	4.221	0.693	7.005	5.709
Years as unmarried in the US	0.003	24.110	3.597	0.005	31.855	4.253	0.003	30.770	5.897
Demographic Controls									
Number of marriages	1	3	1.077	1	3	1.211	1	4	1.147
Age at marriage	14	61	29.454	18	59	29.391	16	61	28.938
Female	0	1	0.415	0	1	0.553	0	1	0.502
Religion									
Catholic	0	1	0.124	0	1	0.304	0	1	0.731
Orthodox Christian	0	1	0.030	0	1	0.248	0	1	0.047
Protestant	0	1	0.101	0	1	0.118	0	1	0.128
Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist	0	1	0.548	0	1	0.124	0	1	0.001
<i>Muslim</i>	0	1	0.068	0	1	0.112	0	0	0.000
<i>Buddhist</i>	0	1	0.096	0	1	0.012	0	0	0.000
<i>Hindu</i>	0	1	0.384	0	0	0.000	0	1	0.001
Jews and other religion	0	1	0.033	0	1	0.019	0	1	0.034
No religion	0	1	0.164	0	1	0.186	0	1	0.059
Visa Category									
Spouse of US citizen or Legal Permanent Resident	0	1	0.314	0	1	0.547	0	1	0.521
Employment Preferences	0	1	0.623	0	1	0.186	0	1	0.094

Major Variables of Interest	East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific			Europe and Central Asia			Latin America and the Caribbean		
	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean
Diversity Immigrants	0	1	0.016	0	1	0.205	0	1	0.003
Legalization	0	1	0.002	0	1	0.006	0	1	0.292
Parent, child or siblings of US citizen, Refugee/Asylee/Parolee or Other visa	0	1	0.044	0	1	0.056	0	1	0.090
No. of observations		427			161			681	

¹ Group size refers to number of people from immigrant's country of birth living in their state of residence

² Group size refers to number of people from immigrant's region of birth living in their state of residence

TABLE 4
Multinomial Logistic Regressions Predicting Inter-Country and Inter-Regional Marriages

	MODEL 1 Inter-Country Marriage (US-Born Spouse)			MODEL 2 Inter-Country Marriage (US-Born White Spouse)			MODEL 3 Inter-Regional Marriage			
	B	SE		B	SE		B	SE		
Explanatory Variables										
Spouse Born in a Different Country										
Spouse Born in a Different Country or US-Born										
Spouse Born in a Different Country but Same Region										
Spouse Born in a Different Region										
Skin color	0.0262	(0.0650)	0.102	(0.0639)	0.0671	(0.0624)	0.00782	(0.0718)	0.103	(0.0611)
Missing skin color	0.336	(0.369)	0.632	(0.355)	0.554	(0.358)	0.354	(0.395)	0.602	(0.338)
Years of education	-0.0105	(0.0291)	-0.0385	(0.0288)	-0.0132	(0.0277)	-0.0194	(0.0326)	-0.0105	(0.0276)
Years educated in the US	0.0506	(0.0459)	0.0352	(0.0462)	0.0539	(0.0432)	-0.0155	(0.0515)	0.00829	(0.0440)
Spouse's years of education	-0.0105	(0.0252)	0.142 **	(0.0284)	-0.00880	(0.0244)	0.150 **	(0.0321)	0.122 **	(0.0268)
Speaks English Well or Very Well	0.668 **	(0.223)	0.914 **	(0.226)	0.743 **	(0.214)	0.739 **	(0.256)	1.002 **	(0.218)
Log of group size by country of origin ¹	-0.237 *	(0.102)	0.0798	(0.104)	-0.200 *	(0.0983)	-0.0239	(0.113)	0.0969	(0.0997)
Log of group size by region of origin ²	0.339 **	(0.129)	-0.356 **	(0.116)	0.243 *	(0.121)	-0.311 *	(0.126)	-0.339 **	(0.112)
Years as unmarried in the US	0.0283	(0.0236)	0.0508 *	(0.0250)	0.0312	(0.0227)	0.0662 *	(0.0276)	0.0560 *	(0.0240)
Demographic Controls										
Number of marriages	0.637 **	(0.246)	0.391	(0.263)	0.618 **	(0.239)	0.157	(0.298)	0.421	(0.252)
Age at marriage	0.00679	(0.0155)	-0.00102	(0.0155)	0.00294	(0.0149)	0.00484	(0.0172)	-0.00286	(0.0150)
Female	0.114	(0.185)	0.217	(0.188)	0.190	(0.177)	0.0313	(0.212)	0.131	(0.180)
Region of Birth										
East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific	-1.301 **	(0.390)	-0.386	(0.340)	-0.858 *	(0.362)	-0.742 *	(0.371)	-0.654 *	(0.316)
Latin America and the Caribbean	-0.382	(0.362)	0.563	(0.334)	-0.296	(0.352)	0.324	(0.359)	0.207	(0.313)
Europe and Central Asia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Religion										
Catholic	-0.484	(0.313)	-0.707 *	(0.315)	-0.289	(0.303)	-0.890 **	(0.337)	-0.615	(0.355)
									-0.557	(0.301)

	MODEL 1 Inter-Country Marriage (US-Born Spouse)				MODEL 2 Inter-Country Marriage (US-Born White Spouse)				MODEL 3 Inter-Regional Marriage			
	Spouse Born in a Different Country		US-Born Spouse		Spouse Born in a Different Country or US-Born		US-Born White Spouse		Spouse Born in a Different Country but Same Region		Spouse Born in a Different Region	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Orthodox Christian	-0.418	(0.418)	-0.837	(0.430)	-0.384	(0.413)	-1.124*	(0.478)	-0.361	(0.483)	-0.811*	(0.409)
Protestant	-0.688	(0.372)	-0.806*	(0.369)	-0.489	(0.354)	-1.306**	(0.413)	-0.843*	(0.424)	-0.676	(0.352)
Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist	-0.711	(0.425)	-1.273**	(0.392)	-0.728	(0.395)	-1.597**	(0.449)	-0.669	(0.551)	-1.182**	(0.356)
Jews and other religion	0.0686	(0.518)	-0.554	(0.564)	0.273	(0.489)	-1.105	(0.653)	-0.297	(0.608)	-0.177	(0.527)
No religion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Visa Category												
Spouse of US citizen or LPR	1.162**	(0.298)	4.114**	(0.414)	1.512**	(0.285)	3.932**	(0.448)	1.056**	(0.368)	3.435**	(0.312)
Diversity Immigrants	-0.131	(0.628)	0.205	(1.112)	0.0800	(0.621)	-13.24	(846.1)	-13.25	(577.8)	0.848	(0.596)
Legalization	1.617**	(0.360)	0.576	(0.739)	1.768**	(0.351)	0.468	(0.868)	1.648**	(0.412)	-0.207	(0.683)
Parent, child or siblings of US citizen, Refugee/Asylee/Parolee or Other visa	0.283	(0.443)	2.022**	(0.541)	0.473	(0.425)	1.854**	(0.603)	0.569	(0.485)	1.242**	(0.465)
Employment Preferences	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Constant	-3.731**	(0.853)	-5.389**	(0.894)	-3.878**	(0.824)	-4.834**	(0.982)	-4.665**	(0.995)	-4.669**	(0.820)
Observations		1269		1269		1208		1269		1269		1269
Pseudo R2		0.276		0.276		0.248		0.248		0.2981		0.2981

** p<0.01,

* p<0.05 (two tailed tests)

Note: Coefficients are log odds