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Differences in occupational homogamy by race, ethnicity, and national origin: A social mobility strategy for Asian Americans

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A social mobility strategy for Asian Americans

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Abstract

BACKGROUND
Rising median age at marriage and increasing lifestyle differentials across occupations suggest that occupations increasingly offer important signals of the economic and cultural resources of potential spouses. Scant attention has been paid to occupational assortative mating in recent years. Rarer are studies about racial, ethnic, and nationality differences in occupational homogamy rates.

OBJECTIVE
We document variations in occupational homogamy rates by race, ethnicity, and national origin and identify factors contributing to group differences in occupational homogamy rates.

METHODS
Using data from the 2006 and 2008–2019 American Community Survey, we compared occupational homogamy rates by race, ethnicity, and nationality. We also used logistic regression models to identify the correlates of occupational homogamy and used Fairlie decomposition models to assess the extent to which individual traits, occupational traits, and place of residence contribute to group differences in occupational homogamy.

RESULTS
Asian American men have higher occupational homogamy rates than non-Asian men. Differences in occupational homogamy rates among Asian national origin groups are greater than group differences among non-Asian men. Among Asian men, Indians have the highest occupational homogamy rates and Koreans have the lowest. Differences in educational attainment and representation in STEM occupations explain a significant portion of group differences in occupational homogamy rates.

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CONTRIBUTION
We reveal that, in addition to educational and occupational attainment, marital sorting on occupation may represent a dimension of "strategic adaptation" in Asian Americans' social mobility.

1. Introduction

Over the past six decades, the median age at marriage in the United States has increased steadily – from a record low of 22 years for men and 20 years for women during the 1950s to 30 years for men and 28 years for women by 2020 (Payne 2021). Young adults in recent cohorts are delaying marriage until well after they finish school (Mare 1991; Smock and Schwartz 2020). Occupational sex segregation has also diminished (Roos and Stevens 2018). The United States has also witnessed a rise in occupational segregation by socioeconomic status and growing wage differentials across occupations, which have contributed to the increasing symbolic significance of occupation as a class and lifestyle marker (Weeden and Grusky 2005). Greater economic and cultural polarization across occupational groups suggests that occupations may have become more important correlates of mate selection as they increasingly signal the economic and cultural resources that potential spouses possess (Schwartz 2013).

Most studies of occupational assortative mating in the United States have focused on patterns and trends during the 1980s or earlier (Hout 1982; Hunt 1940; Kalmijn 1994). Scant attention has been paid to occupational assortative mating in recent decades (Schwartz 2013). Han and Qian (2021) and Schwartz and colleagues (2021) are noteworthy exceptions; however, these studies do not assess whether the tendency to form occupational homogamy differs by race, ethnicity, and nationality. This knowledge gap exists, although there are several reasons to expect occupational homogamy rates to be higher among non-Hispanic Asians (hereafter "Asian Americans" or "Asians") than among their peers in other racial/ethnic groups. Asian Americans attain more schooling than members of other racial/ethnic groups (Xie and Goyette 2003; Zhou and Lee 2017). Given the positive association between educational attainment and occupational homogamy (Schwartz, Wang, and Mare 2021), Asian Americans' educational advantage leads us to expect that their occupational homogamy rates will be higher than those of other groups. Furthermore, Asian Americans frequently perceive entry into science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) occupations, particularly becoming a doctor, as the desired pathway to upward mobility (Lee and Zhou 2014; Xie and Goyette 2004). They do so under the assumption that such occupations have more objective standards of evaluation and are less discriminatory against Asian Americans (Xie and Goyette 2004).

Reliance on educational and occupational attainment as an individual strategy for adaptation and social mobility may also heighten Asian Americans' emphasis on the occupation as a criterion to determine the economic attractiveness of potential spouses (Xie and Goyette 2003).

Using annual data from the 2006 and 2008–2019 American Community Survey, we examine variations in occupational homogamy by race, ethnicity, and nationality in the United States.[3] To do so, we first document variations in occupational homogamy rates by men's race, ethnicity, and nationality. Second, we estimate logistic regression models to identify the correlates of occupational homogamy. Third, we use Fairlie decomposition to assess the extent to which individual characteristics and occupational traits explain variations in occupational homogamy rates by race, ethnicity, and national origin. When conducting these analyses, we focus on differences in occupational homogamy rates between Asian American men and men in other major racial/ethnic groups. Given recent work highlighting the heterogeneity within the pan-ethnic Asian category (Budiman and Ruiz 2021; Gavigan 2021; Sakamoto, Goyette, and Kim 2009), we also disaggregate Asian Americans by national origin.

This study contributes to the literature on assortative mating and racial/ethnic inequality in important ways. First, our study compares men's occupational homogamy rates by race, ethnicity, and national origin. Occupations are important dimensions of martial sorting and shape the reproduction of social inequality within and across generations (Dribe and Lundh 2010). Yet, as noted by Schwartz (2013) in her review, scant attention has been paid to occupational homogamy in recent years. Even less attention has been paid to racial/ethnic differences in occupational assortative mating patterns. Second, we contribute insights to the literature on the assimilation of Asian Americans. Prior work has shown that Asian Americans use college majors and occupational choices as a strategy for socioeconomic mobility (Xie and Goyette 2003). Our study assesses whether this strategy is further reinforced via occupational homogamy. Third, recent research has underscored the importance of recognizing heterogeneity within the Asian American pan-ethnic group (Lee 2019). We answer this research call by comparing occupational assortative mating patterns for distinct Asian national origin groups. Finally, we go beyond describing differences and seek to identify the factors that contribute to variations in occupational homogamy rates by race, ethnicity, and national origin.

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[3] Occupational homogamy may occur because (a) potential partners with the same occupation work in the same place, (b) potential partners with the same occupation meet via work-related networks outside the workplace, or (c) potential partners with the same occupation meet outside the workplace or independent of their work-related networks. Marriages among people who work in the same workplace may not be occupationally homogamous, as a workplace may include people with distinct occupations.

2. Background

2.1 Occupation as a key correlate determining partner selection

Partner choice is shaped by the interplay between (1) individual traits that affect people's readiness to marry, the characteristics they deem desirable in a spouse, and their attractiveness as potential spouses; and (2) local marriage market conditions that constrain people's ability to actualize their preferences by determining the availability of potential partners (Kalmijn 1998; Lichter, Andersen, and Hayward 1995; Oppenheimer 1988; Schwartz 2013).

Preferences for occupational homogamy may be the by-product of people's desire to maximize their socioeconomic well-being. Married couples often pool their resources; thus single individuals may wish to optimize their lifelong socioeconomic well-being by marrying a spouse with many economic resources (Blossfeld and Buchholz 2009; Kalmijn 1998; Schwartz 2013). Given recent increases in wage differentials across occupations, occupational attainment may be a key correlate of long-term economic well-being (Schwartz, Wang, and Mare 2021; Sweeney 2002). Single people generally display a preference for potential partners with higher earnings, and they need to compete for economically desirable spouses (Kalmijn 1998; Sweeney and Cancian 2004). Partners with high-paying occupations will choose each other, leaving those with lower-paying occupations to sort among themselves (Kalmijn 1998; Schwartz 2013). At the aggregate level, this preference and competition foster occupational homogamy.

In every marital search, there is uncertainty regarding the long-term economic prospects of the potential spouse (Kalmijn 1994; Oppenheimer 1988). For some, especially those with high-paying and stable jobs, the decision to form occupational homogamy may partially emerge from a desire to reduce uncertainty about a potential partner due to imperfect information (Oppenheimer 1988). By marrying a spouse with the same occupation, a person has better access to general information about the partner's earnings, job quality, and job security. In addition, people may have access to partner-specific information, such as a partner's reputation in their field. Access to such information further reduces uncertainty about the spouse's long-term economic potential.

Single people's desire to sort along occupational lines may also be motivated by a desire for a spouse who has similar cultural values (Kalmijn 1994). Having similar cultural resources, such as tastes, knowledge bases, political attitudes, and worldviews, makes it easier for spouses to have conversations, offer each other social confirmation, partake in joint activities, and reduce potential conflict in family decision-making (Kalmijn 1994, 1998; Schwartz 2013; Streib 2015). Due to increasing occupational segregation by socioeconomic status and growing wage inequalities across occupations,

occupations are increasingly linked to attitudes, tastes, lifestyles, and life trajectories (Cambois et al. 2011; Rivera 2012; Villarreal 2020; Weeden and Grusky 2005).

People's ability to actualize their marital preferences depends on their ability to meet and interact with desirable potential partners (Lichter et al. 1992; McClendon, Kuo, and Raley 2014). With the rising age at marriage and decreasing occupational sex segregation, work-related networks may be increasingly important in generating opportunities to meet potential spouses (Han and Qian 2021; Laumann et al. 1994; McClendon, Kuo, and Raley 2014; Schwartz 2013). The sociodemographic characteristics of one's occupation are therefore important correlates for marital sorting (Kalmijn 1994; McClendon, Kuo, and Raley 2014). For example, people in very specialized and uncommon occupations will have a narrower work-related network and may have greater difficulty actualizing their preferences for occupational homogamy (Kalmijn 1994). Likewise, for heterosexual couples, forming occupational homogamy is more difficult when there are high levels of occupational sex segregation and a lower concentration of members of the opposite sex (Han and Qian 2021; McClendon, Kuo, and Raley 2014). For example, occupational sex segregation is higher in blue-collar occupations, which means that occupational homogamy will be persistently lower among men and women in these occupations (Schwartz, Wang, and Mare 2021). Because people do not sort along one dimension and because racial/ethnic differences continue to be the most salient barrier to marriage (Campbell and Martin 2016; Qian, Glick, and Batson 2012), occupational homogamy rates may be higher among single people in occupations with high shares of co-ethnics. Conceivably, a high share of single workers may be a sign of incompatibilities between work and married life; thus occupational homogamy rates may be lower in occupations with higher shares of single workers. However, it is equally possible that the opposite will be true, as there may be a more ample supply of potential partners people can meet via their work-related networks.

2.2 Prior work on occupational homogamy

Past studies describing socioeconomic homogamy have largely focused on educational assortative mating (see Blossfeld 2009; Kalmijn 1998; Schwartz 2013). Less attention has been paid to occupational assortative mating (Schwartz 2013). Furthermore, the majority of existing work on occupational assortative mating focuses on patterns during or before the 1980s (Hout 1982; Hunt 1940; Kalmijn 1994). These studies suggest that people display a preference for a spouse who works in the same occupation (Kalmijn 1994; Smits, Ultee, and Lammers 1999). They also show that preferences for occupational homogamy arise largely because of the desire for a spouse who is culturally similar (Kalmijn 1994).

Schwartz (2013) underscored the importance of studying more recent patterns of occupational assortative mating given the rise in age at marriage and the growing occupational segregation by socioeconomic status. Not only do occupations shape single people's ability to meet potential partners via work-related networks in and outside of the workplace, but they help determine the attractiveness of spouses by serving as signals of the economic and cultural resources someone brings to the union (Kalmijn 1994). Schwartz and colleagues (2021) and Han and Qian (2021) were among the few studies to address Schwartz's call (2013) for more research. Schwartz and colleagues (2021) showed that occupational homogamy rates were highest among those with high-paying occupations (upper professionals) and lowest among those in low-paying occupations (blue-collar workers). Han and Qian (2021) showed that occupational homogamy rates were higher among college graduates with majors that had greater vocational specificity. Racial/ethnic disparities in occupational homogamy rates are not the focus of these studies. Schwartz and colleagues (2021) could not consider race/ethnicity as a dimension of their study due to the data-intensive nature of table-raking techniques. Han and Qian (2021) found that non-Hispanic Blacks had lower odds of homogamy than non-Hispanic Whites that but non-Hispanic others had higher odds of homogamy. In their study, Asian Americans were lumped with several other groups in the "non-Hispanic other" category, preventing us from ascertaining differences in occupational homogamy between Asian Americans and other racial/ethnic groups.

2.3 Potential contributors to group variations in occupational homogamy rates

There are several reasons to expect that occupational homogamy rates will differ by race, ethnicity, and national origin. First, educational levels differ markedly by race, ethnicity, and national origin. Among the four major racial/ethnic groups, college enrollment and graduation rates are highest for Asian Americans and lowest for Hispanics. Among Asian Americans, college graduation rates are highest among Asian Indians (75%) and lowest among Filipinos (48%) (Budiman and Ruiz 2021). At 57%, the college graduation rates of Chinese men fall somewhere in between these extremes. There is a positive educational gradient in occupational homogamy. This pattern may emerge because occupational sex segregation is higher in blue-collar work than in professional jobs (Schwartz, Wang, and Mare 2021). Blue-collar workers, who on average earn less and have fewer educational credentials than professionals, will have fewer opportunities to interact with single persons of a different sex in the workplace or work-related networks. Low-paying jobs tend to offer workers less job security than high-paying occupations (Kalleberg 2011). Limited job security may mean that having a low-paying occupation reduces someone's attractiveness as a potential spouse (Schneider, Harknett, and

Stimpson 2019). Compared to those with high-paying jobs, those with low-paying jobs may have less of a desire to marry each other.

The second reason is related to group differences in immigration experiences. Many US firms in the technology industry handle labor shortages by recruiting foreign workers (Hanson and Slaughter 2016). To illustrate, workers from India received the largest share of H-1B visas (51%) and Chinese workers received the second largest share (10%) (Ruiz 2017). [4] Conceivably, work-related networks may offer foreign workers greater opportunities to interact with co-ethnic potential partners with comparable levels of schooling. This would result in higher occupational homogamy rates among Asian Americans, particularly Indians and Chinese, than among other groups.

The final reason centers on racial inequalities in the labor market. Researchers argue that Asian Americans try to mitigate the effects of labor market discrimination by attaining higher levels of education, majoring in fields associated with higher earnings potential and job security, and entering STEM fields with a higher concentration of Asian Americans (Xie and Goyette 2003). As marriage affects the consolidation of resources and the reproduction of social mobility (Maralani and Portier 2021; Schwartz 2013), Asian Americans may also assign a greater value to spouses who have STEM jobs when determining the attractiveness of potential partners. Competition in the marriage market for partners with the most desirable occupations may contribute to Asian Americans in comparable occupations pairing with one other, thereby leading to their higher occupational homogamy rates.

2.4 Hypotheses

Based on past findings, we derive the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Occupational homogamy rates will be highest for Asian Americans and lowest for Hispanics.

Hypothesis 2: Among Asian Americans, there will be considerable heterogeneity in occupational homogamy rates by national origin. Asian Indian and Chinese men, in particular, will have higher occupational homogamy rates than other Asian American men.

Hypothesis 3: Differences in occupational homogamy rates by race, ethnicity, and nationality will emerge largely due to group differences in educational attainment and concentration in STEM occupations.

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[4] The H-1B visa program is the primary way US companies hire high-skilled foreign workers.

3. Data and methods

3.1 Data

We use data from the 2006 and 2008–2019 American Community Survey (ACS), obtained from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample (IPUMS). The annual ACS, which replaced the long-form decennial census, samples 1% of the US population and includes data about respondents' sociodemographic characteristics, occupations, and marital experiences (Ruggles et al. 2022). The 2006 ACS captures the sociodemographic traits of occupations. Pooled 2008–2019 ACS data measure the occupational assortative mating patterns and individual correlates of occupational sorting behavior. Starting in 2008, the ACS added several questions about respondents' marriage behavior (US Census Bureau 2014). Therefore we use data from 2008 onward. We do not use data from the 2020 ACS because the US Census Bureau (2021) warned users to exercise caution given the low response rates due to the COVID-19 pandemic.[5]

Pooled ACS data are especially well suited for the study of occupational homogamy for several reasons. First, a spousal locator can be used to identify coresident spouses and to ascertain whether someone married a partner with the same occupation. Second, the ACS asks married respondents the year of their marriage, which allows us to identify recent marriages and to reduce the bias from differential dissolution rates and post-marital changes in occupation. Third, for foreign-born respondents, the ACS asks year of arrival to the United States, which, when combined with the year of marriage, allows the exclusion of marriages formed abroad. Finally, the chief advantage of the ACS is its large size. The pooled ACS includes sufficient numbers of Asian Americans to permit disaggregation by national origin.

3.2 Sample

Our sample consists of different-sex first marriages formed within two years of the interview date. Restricting our sample to recent marriages minimizes biases resulting from differences in dissolution rates between homogamous and heterogamous unions (Choi and Tienda 2018; Mäenpää and Jalovaara 2014). We focus on first marriages because sorting behavior differs between first and subsequent marriages (Choi and

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[5] We included couples who wed within two years of the interview date. For example, using data from the 2008 ACS, we captured marriages that occurred in 2006, 2007, and 2008. The 2006 ACS captures the occupational traits of the year or the year before the marriage occurred. As a robustness check, we measured the sociodemographic traits of occupations two years before marriage (e.g., the 2017 ACS for marriages formed in 2019) and obtained robust results.

Tienda 2018). We exclude same-sex marriages because they were legalized in 2015 and same-sex couples could not legally marry between 2006 and 2014. Like prior work (Schwartz, Wang, and Mare 2021; Weeden and Grusky 2012), we exclude husbands living in group quarters, working in the military, or not working. We also limit our sample to employed women because we are interested in capturing occupational assortative mating among those with an occupation. We focus on marriages involving non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and non-Hispanic Asian spouses because non-Hispanic others are a group with heterogeneous assortative mating patterns (Choi and Tienda 2018). To ensure that enough respondents have an occupation, we restrict our analyses to couples in which husbands and wives are in their prime working ages (25–54).[6] Furthermore, we exclude couples who wed abroad because we are interested in assortative mating patterns in US marriage markets. Finally, we focus on couples with non-missing data on key covariates of interest. These restrictions yield an analytical sample of 149,457 marriages. Table A-1 in the online appendix summarizes how these restrictions affect the sample.

Our sample consists of recent marriages involving two working spouses. As robustness checks, we ran analyses using a sample of recent marriages involving employed husbands, irrespective of wives' employment status, as well as a sample including unemployed husbands and wives. Our results are robust. Appendix Tables A-2 and A-3 present the results.

3.3 Covariates

3.3.1 Dependent variable

Occupational homogamy is our dependent variable. It distinguishes marriages involving husbands and wives with the same occupation from those involving spouses with distinct occupations. We define occupations using the US Census Bureau's 2010 ACS occupation classification system, which distinguishes across 453 occupational categories.

As a robustness check, we ran analyses with several other occupational classification schemes akin to those used in prior work, with 10, 23, and 98 occupational categories (Han and Qian 2021; Hout 1982; Kalmijn 1994; Schwartz, Wang, and Mare 2021). Occupational homogamy rates are higher when we use fewer categories of occupations, but findings about the pattern of variation in occupational homogamy rates by race, ethnicity, and national origin are robust (see Table A-4).

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[6] In robustness checks, we ran the models using alternate age restrictions, and our results were robust.

3.3.2 Independent variables

Husband's race/ethnicity is an independent variable. The ACS asks respondents to report the race of each household member.[7] It also asks respondents to report whether each household member is of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. We use this information to classify husbands into four categories: non-Hispanic Whites (hereafter 'Whites'), non-Hispanic Blacks (hereafter 'Blacks'), Hispanics, and non-Hispanic Asians (hereafter 'Asians' or 'Asian Americans'). These classifications are the four largest categories in the ethno-racial pentagon, which is widely used to document patterns of racial/ethnic variation in the United States (Hollinger 2006).

Husband's nationality further disaggregates Asian men according to their national origin. We focus on the four Asian national groups with the largest sample size (Chinese, Asian Indian, Filipino, Korean) and aggregate others into a single residual category ("other Asians"). The Chinese, Asian Indian, Filipino, and Korean groups accounted for 73% of the Asian American population in 2019 (Budiman and Ruiz 2021).

We report occupational homogamy rates by husband's (rather than wife's) race, ethnicity, and nationality in the main text. Our decision is motivated by the fact that higher shares of married men work and report their occupations. However, in Table A-5 in the appendix, we present the results from analyses comparing occupational homogamy rates by wife's traits. Gender differences in the pattern of variation in occupational homogamy rates by race, ethnicity, and national origin are small.

We also focus on the comparison between the occupational assortative mating behavior of Asian Americans and other groups. Thus, in the analyses presented in the main text, we disaggregate Asian Americans, but not Hispanics, according to their nationality. However, in Table A-6, we present results from analyses using an alternate operationalization, where we also disaggregate Hispanics by national origin. Among Hispanic men, differences in occupational homogamy rates by nationality are small.

3.3.3 Other correlates of occupational assortative mating

Our models include several other correlates of occupational assortative mating and marital sorting by race/ethnicity (Choi and Tienda 2017; Han and Qian 2021). These correlates include *husband's nativity status/age at migration* (foreign-born who arrived before 12, 12–19, 20–29, and 30+ years vs. US-born), *husband's age at marriage* (30–34, 35–39, 40+ vs. 25–29), *husband's education* (some college, college graduate,

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[7] The respondents have these options: White, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, other Asian, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, other Pacific Islander, some other race.

master's degree or higher vs. high school or less), *husband works in STEM* (science, technology, engineering, or math vs. other), *educational assortative mating* (hypergamy, hypogamy vs. homogamy), *interracial/inter-ethnic union* (intermarriage vs. endogamy), and *age differences between spouses* (husband is zero to two years older, the husband is at least three years older vs. wife is older).

We also account for sociodemographic differences in occupational traits. These variables, which range from 0 to 100, are standardized so that the coefficients represent the impact of one standard deviation change in occupational conditions on the odds of occupational homogamy.

1. *Relative size of the occupation*: percentage of adults aged 25+ years with occupation *j*.
2. *Percentage of female workers in occupation j*.
3. *Percentage of workers from the same race/ethnicity or nationality in occupation j*.
4. *Percentage of foreign-born workers of the same race/ethnicity or nationality in occupation j*.
5. *Percentage of unmarried workers in occupation j*.

Finally, we include several measures of geographic context (Choi and Tienda 2021). Specifically, we control for whether the respondent lived in a *metropolitan area* (yes, no), and we control for the *region* (Northeast, Midwest, South, West). Considering potential correlations between our correlates, we test for multicollinearity. Our variance inflation factor (VIF) is below the threshold indicating multicollinearity (< 2).

3.4 Analysis plan

We first document variations in occupational homogamy rates by race, ethnicity, and national origin. We then estimate logistic regression models to predict the odds of occupational homogamy, adjusting for clustering within occupations. We run these models using the full sample or subsamples disaggregated by race/ethnicity and nationality. All models are weighted using husband's personal weights divided by the number of pooled data years (i.e., 12).[8]

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[8] The sample person weights (perwt) for the annual ACS ensure that estimates are representative of a given year. We pool 12 years of ACS data (2008–2019). If we were to use person weights from annual ACS data, we would obtain population estimates 12 times the size of the US population. Following recommendations from the IPUMS forum (https://forum.ipums.org/t/weighting-data-for-multi-year-estimates/3169), we divide person weights by 12 and obtain estimates representative of the US population.

Unobserved heterogeneity and changes in the variance of error distribution preclude us from comparing the regression coefficients across differently specified models fitted to the same sample (Karlson, Holm, and Breen 2012). Thus we conduct Fairlie decomposition analyses for binary outcomes to assess the relative importance of individual characteristics, assortative mating patterns, occupational traits, and place of residence for explaining group differences in propensities to form occupational homogamy. The decomposition estimates are computed using (a) mean differences in the distribution of covariates between the groups in comparison and (b) coefficients for each covariate for a chosen group (Fairlie and Robb 2007; Jann 2006). We present the results from decomposition analyses using coefficients for non-Asians (e.g., White for the White/Asian comparison) for the racial/ethnic comparison and coefficients for the group with the higher occupational homogamy rates. (See Tables A-7–A-8 for coefficients from group-specific analyses.) Because decomposition estimates depend on the matching of members of two groups, we assess the robustness of the empirical results by randomly drawing the subsample of members of the larger group in pairwise comparisons and conducting 50 replications. Because results about the relative importance of specific covariates also differ depending on the order in which covariates are added (Jann 2006), we also randomized the order. Our results are robust.

We recognize that log-linear models are the standard in the literature on assortative mating. We use this alternate approach because log-linear models control for differential availability of potential spouses (Blossfeld 2009; Choi and Tienda 2017; Schwartz 2013). A key research question in our paper is: How do occupational traits that often shape the availability of potential spouses via work-related networks influence differential occupational homogamy rates by race, ethnicity, and nationality?

4. Results

4.1 Sample characteristics

Table 1 compares individual traits and occupational traits according to husband's race, ethnicity, and national origin. Our results for racial/ethnic differences (shown in Panel A) are largely consistent with past findings (Sakamoto, Goyette, and Kim 2009; Hummer and Hamilton 2010). Asian men have higher levels of education than men in other groups. Relative to White and Black men, higher shares of Asian and Hispanic men are foreign-born. Relative to Hispanic men, Asian men migrated to the United States at older ages. To illustrate, 59% of Asian men migrated after they turned 20 years, which contrasts with 50% of their Hispanic counterparts: $\left[100 * \frac{33+8}{100-30} = 59; \ 100 * \frac{18+6}{100-52} = 50 \right]$. A higher share of Asian men work in a STEM occupation: 40% of Asian men versus 10%–17% of

non-Asian men. Relative to Black and Hispanic men, lower shares of Asian men married after they turned 40. Reflecting the geographic dispersal of ethno-racial groups (Frey 2021), higher shares of Asian and Hispanic men reside in the West. The share of men living in metropolitan areas is highest among Asian men (97%) and lowest among White men (84%).

A comparison of the sociodemographic traits of occupations reveals that Asian and White men are more likely than Hispanic and Black men to work in occupations with lower shares of single workers. To illustrate, Asian and White men have occupations where approximately 40% of the workers are single, which contrasts with 47% for Black and Hispanic men. Asian men work in occupations with higher concentrations of female workers: 39% of Asian men versus 30% of Hispanic, 35% of White, and 36% of Black men.

Among Asian men, Indian men have the highest levels of education and Filipino men have the lowest. Sixty percent of Asian Indians have a master's degree or higher, which contrasts with 13% of Filipino men. Meanwhile, relative to men of other national origin groups, higher shares of Asian Indian and Chinese men are married to wives with the same education levels: 61% of Chinese and Asian Indian men versus 49% of Korean men and 52% of Filipino men. Asian Indian men transition into marriage at younger ages than Asian men of other nationalities. Relative to other national origin groups, more Filipino men are US-born: 44% of Filipinos versus 17%–37% of Asian men of other nationalities. A higher share of Asian Indian men migrated after the age of 12. Similarly, more Asian Indian men are in STEM occupations: 58% of Asian Indian men versus 28%–38% of Asian men of other nationalities.

An examination of occupational traits and geographic contexts reveals that Filipino men work in jobs with a higher concentration of women than do Asian men of other nationalities (48% vs. 34%–41%). Similarly, Indian men work in jobs with a lower concentration of single workers than do Asian men of other nationalities (35% vs. 38%–43%). The share of Asian men living in the West is highest among Filipinos (67%) and lowest among Asian Indian men (29%). By contrast, relative to Asian men of other nationalities, more Chinese men reside in the Northeast: 29% of Chinese men versus 11%–27% of other men. Asian Indian men are more evenly dispersed across the regions.

Table 1: **Sample characteristics**

	Race/ethnicity				National origin				
	NH White	NH Black	Hispanic	NH Asian	Chinese	Filipino	Indian	Korean	Other Asian
	106,036	11,909	20,488	11,024	2,853	1,412	2,844	1,041	2,874
	65.3	10.9	16.4	7.5	1.8	1.0	2.1	0.7	2.0
Education (col %)									
HS or less	19	37	50	11	11	12	4	6	21
Some college	27	34	26	15	10	31	5	15	23
College graduate	37	20	17	35	36	43	31	45	33
Master's degree	18	9	7	38	44	13	60	34	24
Age at marriage (col %)									
25–29	46	32	37	40	41	34	50	32	34
30–34	33	31	32	37	36	37	38	40	35
35–39	13	18	16	14	14	17	9	19	17
40+	8	19	15	9	9	13	3	8	14
Nativity/age at migration (col %)									
US-born	94	84	52	30	30	44	17	30	37
FB, <12	2	3	9	16	15	18	9	27	21
FB, 12–19	1	4	16	13	16	14	8	15	14
FB, 20–29	2	6	18	33	33	15	59	18	20
FB, 30+	1	4	6	8	6	9	7	9	8
% STEM	17	12	10	40	38	37	58	30	28
Educational homogamy									
Homo (H=W)	44	41	47	55	61	52	61	49	48
Hyper (H>W)	19	18	17	21	19	16	21	27	23
Hypo (H<W)	37	40	36	24	20	32	17	23	29
Age gap									
Wife is older	23	25	27	19	19	21	16	17	21
H>W: 0–2 years	45	38	38	45	47	44	48	43	40
H>W: 3+ years	32	37	35	37	34	35	36	41	40
% interracial	9	21	26	27	23	36	18	29	33
Occupational traits									
Relative size	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4
% co-ethnic	73.2	12.7	16.9	10.0	--	--	--	--	--
% same nation	--	--	--	--	3.1	1.4	5.5	0.8	2.5
% female	34.5	35.5	30.2	39.1	39.3	47.5	34.0	41.2	39.5
% FB, group	5.3	10.8	54.0	79.0	80.6	77.3	92.1	86.1	67.7
% single	40.9	46.5	47.0	39.1	39.0	42.9	35.3	38.4	41.6
Region									
Northeast	24	17	16	22	29	11	27	24	14
Midwest	26	16	10	13	10	8	17	11	14
South	29	58	34	21	15	14	27	20	24
West	21	9	40	44	46	67	29	45	48
% metro	84	90	94	97	98	96	98	99	95

Source: 2006 and 2008–2019 American Community Survey.
Sample: 149,457 recent marriages.
Notes: Percentages are weighted. Numbers are not weighted. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

4.2 Differences in occupational homogamy rates by race, ethnicity, and national origin

Table 2 compares occupational homogamy rates by husband's race, ethnicity, and nationality. Demarcating racial/ethnic differences in occupational homogamy rates are observed between Asian and non-Asian men. To illustrate, 12% of Asian men are married to a partner with the same occupation, which contrasts with 4%–6% of men in other groups. Considerable heterogeneity exists in the occupational homogamy rates of Asian men with varying nationalities. For example, 8% of Korean men are in occupational homogamy, compared with 10% of Filipino, 11% of Chinese, and 17% of Asian Indian men.

Table 2: Occupational homogamy rates by husband's race, ethnicity, and national origin

	N	%	95th CI	
Race/ethnicity				
NH White	106,036	5.32	5.18	5.45
NH Black	11,909	4.36	3.99	4.72
Hispanic	20,488	5.84	5.53	6.17
NH Asian	11,024	11.74	11.16	12.36
National origin				
Chinese	2,853	11.47	10.30	12.64
Filipino	1,412	10.03	8.47	11.60
Asian Indian	2,844	16.80	15.42	18.17
Korean	1,041	8.19	6.52	9.86
Other Asian	2,874	8.90	7.86	9.94

Source: 2006 and 2008–2019 American Community Survey.
Sample: 149,457 recent marriages.
Notes: Percentages are weighted. Numbers are not weighted.

4.3 Multivariate analyses

Table 3 presents results from logistic regression models predicting the odds of occupational homogamy. Column A documents variations by race/ethnicity. Stark differences in odds of occupational homogamy are observed between those with and without a master's degree. The odds that those with a master's degree form an occupational homogamy are 2.1 times the corresponding odds for men with a high school education or less. Working in STEM is associated with 39% higher odds of occupational homogamy. Arriving in the United States after turning 20 years of age is associated with higher odds of occupational homogamy. Having occupations with higher concentrations

of co-ethnic and female workers is associated with higher odds of occupational homogamy. By contrast, working in occupations with higher shares of single workers is associated with lower odds of occupational homogamy. Similarly, being in an educational heterogamy is associated with lower odds of occupational homogamy. Men living in metropolitan areas have 15% lower odds of occupational homogamy than those living in non-metropolitan areas. Net of these controls, Hispanic and Asian men are more likely than White men to marry a partner with the same occupation. Asian men's adjusted odds of occupational homogamy are 50% higher than the corresponding odds for Whites. White/Black and Hispanic/Asian differences are negligible.

Column B presents the results for differences by national origin among Asian men. Even net of controls, Asian Indians have higher odds of occupational homogamy than other Asian men. Asian Indian men's adjusted odds are double the corresponding odds for White men. This contrasts with a differential of 1.4 times for Chinese men. Korean and Filipino men's adjusted odds are similar to the corresponding odds for Whites.

We conduct analyses specific to race, ethnicity, and national origin (see Tables A-8 and A-9). The results are largely similar to results obtained using the pooled sample. Therefore, in the interest of parsimony, we compare group-specific results with those obtained using the pooled sample. First, being in an interracial union is associated with higher odds of occupational homogamy for White and Asian men, but the opposite is true for Black and Hispanic men. Second, having a younger wife is generally associated with lower odds of occupational homogamy. Blacks are an exception. Finally, working in a STEM occupation is associated with higher odds of occupational homogamy for most Asian men. Chinese men deviate from this pattern. For them, working in a STEM occupation is associated with lower odds of occupational homogamy.

Table 3: **Logistic regression models predicting the odds of forming an occupational homogamy by husband's traits**

	Race/ethnicity			Nationality		
	OR	95th CI		OR	95th CI	
Race/ethnicity (NH White)						
NH Black	0.91	0.76	1.09	0.91	0.76	1.10
Hispanic	1.47	1.21	1.79	1.48	1.22	1.80
NH Asian	1.50	1.26	1.78	--	--	--
Chinese				1.39	1.05	1.83
Filipino	--	--	--	1.06	0.80	1.41
Asian Indian	--	--	--	2.02	1.45	2.82
Korean	--	--	--	1.15	0.89	1.48
Other Asian	--	--	--	1.37	1.07	1.75
Age at marriage (25–29)						
30–34	0.95	0.88	1.02	0.95	0.88	1.02
35–39	0.83	0.73	0.95	0.84	0.74	0.95
40+	0.95	0.83	1.08	0.96	0.84	1.08
Nativity/age at migration (US-born)						
FB, <12	1.00	0.85	1.18	1.01	0.86	1.18
FB, 12–19	1.10	0.89	1.35	1.09	0.89	1.34
FB, 20–29	1.43	1.16	1.77	1.40	1.15	1.69
FB, 30+	1.38	1.14	1.67	1.37	1.12	1.66
Education (HS or less)						
Some college	0.84	0.73	0.98	0.85	0.73	0.98
College graduate	0.89	0.69	1.13	0.90	0.70	1.15
Master's degree	2.05	1.35	3.11	2.08	1.36	3.19
STEM (not)	1.39	1.04	1.85	1.42	1.06	1.89
EAM (wife=husband)						
W<H	0.34	0.23	0.52	0.34	0.23	0.52
W>H	0.49	0.42	0.59	0.49	0.42	0.58
Age gap (W>H)						
H≥W: 0–2 years	0.88	0.82	0.95	0.88	0.82	0.95
H>W: 3+	0.98	0.89	1.08	0.98	0.89	1.07
Interracial (same)	1.00	0.89	1.13	1.01	0.90	1.13
Region (Northeast)						
Midwest	1.06	0.94	1.20	1.06	0.94	1.19
South	1.10	0.98	1.23	1.09	0.98	1.23
West	1.12	1.00	1.24	1.12	1.00	1.25
Metro (non-metro)	0.85	0.73	0.98	0.84	0.73	0.98
Occupational traits#						
Relative size	1.31	1.21	1.43	1.31	1.21	1.43
% co-ethnic	1.35	1.21	1.50	--	--	--
% same nation	--	--	--	1.34	1.21	1.49
% female	1.91	1.72	2.13	1.89	1.69	2.11
% foreign-born	1.15	1.01	1.31	1.15	1.01	1.30
% single	0.82	0.72	0.94	0.82	0.72	0.94
Intercept	0.06	0.05	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.07

Source: 2006 and 2008–2019 American Community Survey.
Sample: 149,457 recent marriages.
Notes: Analyses are weighted. All models account for clustering within occupations. EAM denotes educational assortative mating.
Standardized coefficients.

4.4 Results from decomposition analyses of group differences in occupational homogamy

4.4.1 Correlates of racial/ethnic differences in occupational homogamy rates

Table 4 presents the results from Fairlie decomposition models for binary outcomes to assess the extent to which individual traits, assortative mating patterns, occupational traits, and geographic distribution explain variations in occupational homogamy rates by husband's race and ethnicity. To obtain these estimates, we rely on coefficients from the group with the larger sample size (e.g., Whites for White/Asian). Among recent marriages involving Asian American men, the smallest gap in occupational homogamy rates is observed among Hispanics and Asians (5.9 percentage points), and the largest gap is observed between Blacks and Asians (7.4 percentage points). Overall, individual traits and to a lesser extent assortative mating patterns contribute to Asian men's higher occupational homogamy rates relative to non-Asian men. By contrast, the impact of occupational traits on Asian/non-Asian disparities in occupational homogamy rates is somewhat more mixed: they suppress White/Asian differences, have little impact on Black/Asian differences, and reduce Hispanic/Asian differences. Place of residence contributes little to racial/ethnic disparities in occupational homogamy rates.

Educational advantage is the primary reason why Asian American men have higher occupational homogamy rates than non-Asian men. To illustrate, once we adjust for educational differentials, the White/Asian and the Black/Asian gaps in occupational homogamy rates, respectively, diminish by 22% and 20%. Greater representation in STEM occupations is another reason why Asian American men marry wives from the same occupation at higher rates than non-Asian men. For example, once we control for differences in representation in STEM occupations, the White/Asian and Black/Asian gaps in occupational homogamy rates diminish by 8% and 11%, respectively. These correlates explain a larger share of the Hispanic/Asian gap in occupational homogamy rates. For instance, adjusting for differences in educational attainment and representation in STEM occupations reduces the Hispanic/Asian gap by 66% and 24%, respectively. Racial/ethnic differences in educational assortative mating patterns also contribute to the gap in occupational homogamy rates between Asian and non-Asian men. To illustrate, net of differences in educational assortative mating patterns, White/Asian and Black/Asian differences in occupational homogamy rates diminish by 8% and 5%, respectively.

Table 4: **Decomposition of racial and ethnic differences in occupational homogamy rates**

	White Asian	Black Asian	Hispanic Asian
Dyadic pair size	117,060	22,933	31,512
Occupational homogamy rates			
High	11.8	11.8	11.8
Low	5.3	4.4	5.8
Gap			
Observed gap	6.4	7.4	5.9
Adjusted gap	4.1	3.4	−1.5
% explained	*33.0*	*46.1*	*126.6*
Percentage of gap explained			
Individual traits			
Education	21.7	19.8	65.7
Age	−0.1	3.0	−1.4
Foreign-born	−0.7	7.1	−1.3
STEM	8.4	10.9	24.4
Subtotal	29.4	40.8	87.4
Assortative mating			
Education difference (EAM)	8.0	5.1	7.5
Age difference	−0.2	0.4	−1.4
Interracial	1.4	−0.6	0.1
Subtotal	9.1	4.9	6.2
Occupational traits			
Relative size	−5.8	−7.1	−17.7
% co-ethnic	3.2	3.4	13.0
% female	−6.7	−10.2	13.3
% foreign-born, group	0.9	−0.1	1.9
% single	2.6	13.3	25.8
Subtotal	−5.8	−0.7	36.2
Place of residence			
Region	1.5	0.3	−0.5
Metro	−1.2	0.8	−2.7
Subtotal	0.3	1.1	−3.2
Total % explained	**33.0**	**46.1**	**126.6**

Source: 2006 and 2008–2019 American Community Survey.
Notes: Results from Fairlie decomposition models for binary outcomes with 50 replicas. The sequence of covariates is randomized. The adjusted gap is the racial/ethnic difference in occupational homogamy rates, net of controls. The results are based on coefficients for the non-Asian group. EAM denotes educational assortative mating. Due to rounding, the sums may not exactly add up to subtotals and totals.

Lower propensity to work with single workers is another reason why Asians have higher occupational homogamy rates than Black and Hispanic men. For example, net of differences in the share of single workers, Black/Asian and Hispanic/Asian differences in occupational homogamy rates diminish by 13% and 26%, respectively. Similarly,

Asian men have higher occupational homogamy rates than Hispanic men because they work in occupations with higher shares of female workers. To illustrate, once we adjust for the share of female workers, the Hispanic/Asian gap in occupational homogamy rates diminishes by 13%. By contrast, the relative size of occupations suppresses disparities in occupational homogamy rates between Asian and non-Asian men. For example, adjusting for the relative size of the occupation increases Black/Asian and Hispanic/Asian disparities in occupational homogamy rates by 7% and 18%, respectively. This finding suggests that Asian American men work in specialized occupations with fewer workers than do Black and Hispanic men. Asian American men's occupational homogamy rates would have been even higher if it weren't for the smaller relative size of their occupations.

4.4.2 Differences in occupational homogamy rates by national origin: Asian American men

Table 5 presents the results from decomposition analyses assessing the extent to which individual traits, assortative mating patterns, occupational traits, and geographic distribution contributed to variations in occupational homogamy rates by husband's nationality. Among recent marriages involving Asian American men, the smallest gap in occupational homogamy rates is observed between Korean and other Asian men (0.7 percentage points), and the largest gap is observed between Korean and Asian Indian men (8.6 percentage points). This section focuses on the results for dyadic pairs with gaps that surpass 2.5 percentage points. To avoid redundancies, we highlight how these results compare with the findings for our analyses of racial/ethnic differences.

Consistent with patterns observed for the results of racial/ethnic differences, disparities in educational attainment, nativity status, and representation in STEM occupations are the key reasons behind the gap in occupational homogamy rates by Asian American men's national origin. Educational differentials explain a larger share of Indian/Filipino differences in occupational homogamy rates than do nativity status and representation in STEM occupations. Adjusting for differences in education, nativity status, and representation in STEM occupations, respectively, reduces the Indian/Filipino gap in occupational homogamy rates by 21%, 14%, and 15%. Deviating from the results obtained for analyses of racial/ethnic disparities, greater representation in STEM occupations explains a larger share of the Indian/Chinese and Indian/Korean differences in occupational homogamy rates than do educational and nativity differentials. To illustrate, net of education and nativity differences, the Indian/Chinese gap diminishes by 7% and 14%, respectively. However, net of differences in representation in STEM occupations, the Indian/Chinese gap decreases by 21%. Unlike the patterns observed for

all other dyadic pairs, the Chinese/Korean gap increases by 8% once we control for differences in representation in STEM fields. This occurs for two reasons. First, for Chinese men, unlike other groups, working in STEM occupations is associated with lower odds of occupational homogamy. Second, relative to Korean men, more Chinese men works in STEM fields.

Table 5: **Decomposition of differences in occupational homogamy rates by national origin, Asian American**

	Indian Chinese	Indian Filipino	Indian Korean	Chinese Korean
Dyadic pair size	5,697	4,256	3,885	3,894
Occupational homogamy rates				
High	16.8	16.8	16.8	11.5
Low	11.5	10.0	8.2	8.2
Gap				
Observed gap	5.3	6.8	8.6	3.3
Adjusted gap	1.7	3.3	3.5	2.7
% explained	*67.5*	*50.1*	*58.3*	*15.6*
Percentage of gap explained				
Individual traits				
Education	6.7	21.0	7.7	27.4
Age	7.7	9.8	8.3	9.2
Foreign-born	14.3	13.7	17.5	9.1
STEM	21.4	15.2	24.2	−7.5
Subtotal	50.1	59.8	57.6	38.2
Assortative mating				
Educational difference (EAM)	0.3	9.8	12.8	22.3
Age difference	−5.6	−3.8	0.6	9.2
Interracial	4.1	8.2	3.6	1.1
Subtotal	−1.2	14.2	17.0	32.6
Occupational traits				
Relative size	−7.4	−18.9	−18.0	−8.3
% same nation	19.9	6.3	9.3	−5.3
% female	−21.2	−55.2	−20.6	−26.0
% foreign-born, group	−1.2	−1.1	−3.9	−1.5
% single	21.4	39.4	12.9	−11.3
Subtotal	11.5	−29.5	−20.3	−52.4
Place of residence				
Region	7.0	5.5	3.5	−5.3
Metro	0.1	0.1	0.6	2.5
Subtotal	7.1	5.6	4.0	−2.8
Total % Explained	***67.5***	***50.1***	***58.3***	***15.6***

Source: 2006 and 2008–2019 American Community Survey.
Notes: Results from Fairlie decomposition models for binary outcomes with 50 replicas. The sequence of covariates is randomized. The adjusted gap is the racial/ethnic difference in occupational homogamy rates, net of controls. The results are based on coefficients for the group with the larger occupational homogamy rates. EAM denotes educational assortative mating. Due to rounding, the sums may not exactly add up to subtotals and totals.

Age at marriage explains a much larger share of the disparities in occupational homogamy rates by national origin than the disparities by race/ethnicity. For example,

once we control for differences in age at marriage and nativity status, the Indian/Filipino gap in occupational homogamy rates diminishes by 10%. The same control explains 3% of the gap in occupational homogamy rates between Asians and Blacks. This pattern emerges because higher shares of Indian men marry at younger ages than do Filipino men. The corresponding differences between Asian and non-Asian men are less salient.

In line with our findings about racial/ethnic disparities, educational assortative mating is another factor contributing to the gap in occupational homogamy by national origin. Differences in the propensity to form interracial unions explain little of the racial/ethnic differences, but Filipino men's greater likelihood of forming interracial unions is a key reason why their occupational homogamy rates are lower than the corresponding rates for Indian men. Adjusting for differences in the prevalence of interracial unions reduces the Filipino/Indian gap by 8%.

The sociodemographic traits of occupations suppress disparities in occupational homogamy rates among Asian men. For instance, adjusting for differences in relative size of the occupation increases the Indian/Chinese and Chinese/Korean gap 7% and 8%, respectively. The share of female workers suppresses the gap between Indian men and other Asian men. To illustrate, the Indian/Korean gap would have been 21% higher if it weren't for the fact that Indian men on average work in fields with fewer female workers relative to their Korean counterparts. By contrast, some occupational traits continue to explain the gap in occupational homogamy among Asian men. Adjusting for differences in the share of single workers in the occupation reduces the gap in occupational homogamy rates. For instance, net of differences in the share of single workers, the Indian/Filipino and Indian/Chinese gaps diminish by 39% and 21%, respectively.

Finally, differences in the region of residence contribute little to racial/ethnic disparities in occupational homogamy rates. By contrast, net of differences in the region of residence, the gap between Indian and other Asian men diminishes. For instance, adjusting for region decreases the Indian/Chinese, Indian/Filipino, and Indian/Korean gap by 7%, 6%, and 4%, respectively. This pattern occurs largely because higher shares of Indian men reside in the South and Midwest and those living in these regions form occupational homogamy at higher rates.

5. Limitations

Our study has a few limitations. First, we cannot account for unmeasured characteristics (e.g., physical attractiveness) that may lead some individuals to be well suited for certain occupations or determine their desirability in the marriage market. Our results, therefore, are necessarily correlational. Second, some of our nationality-specific analyses rely on small samples (e.g., N = 1,041 for Koreans; N = 1,412 for Filipinos). Future work can

test the robustness of our findings using data with larger numbers of Korean and Filipino respondents. Third, based on our data, we cannot ascertain whether respondents in an occupation met via work-related networks or whether they met earlier, entered into the same occupation, and married at a later point in time. The latter would increase occupational homogamy rates irrespective of whether or not occupation serves as a dimension of marital sorting. Future surveys should endeavor to collect more data on where couples meet (Blossfeld 2009). Fourth, our study examines occupational homogamy patterns for married individuals. We cannot examine these patterns for cohabiting couples because information on when cohabitation started was lacking and there are not enough cohabiting couples in the ACS to disaggregate them by national origin. Future studies should endeavor to examine occupational sorting for cohabiting couples. Finally, like prior work (Han and Qian 2021; McClendon, Kuo, and Raley 2014), we rely on the national average of occupational traits. In supplementary analyses, we estimated models using covariates capturing occupational traits in the respondent's local marriage market. We do not present these results in the main text because we disaggregated the data by 453 occupations and 543 marriage markets, which meant that a non-negligible share of occupational marriage markets had zero observations on several occupational traits.

6. Conclusion

The rising age at marriage, declining occupational sex segregation, and growing wage inequality across occupations suggest that occupation is increasingly an important determinant of the economic attractiveness of potential spouses and that work-related networks are increasingly important for shaping an individual's search for a marital partner (McClendon, Kuo, and Raley 2014; Schwartz 2013; Schwartz, Wang, and Mare 2021). Yet studies of occupational assortative mating have received scant attention in recent years (Schwartz 2013). In particular, existing work on occupational assortative mating has paid little attention to racial/ethnic disparities in occupational homogamy rates. We fill this gap in the literature by describing differences in patterns of occupational homogamy by race, ethnicity, and national origin and identifying factors that contribute to these differences. Our study yields the following noteworthy findings.

First, Asian American men are more likely than men in other racial/ethnic groups to form an occupational homogamy. Consistent with *Hypothesis 1*, Asian Americans are more likely than their peers in other racial/ethnic groups to marry spouses with the same occupation. This finding is observed irrespective of the operationalization of occupations (e.g., 10, 23, 98, or 453 occupation categories). Twelve percent of Asian American men are in an occupational homogamy, which contrasts with approximately 5% of their peers

in other racial/ethnic groups. Prior work shows that Asian Americans strategically choose college majors and occupations that facilitate their entry into high-paying occupations and social mobility over the long run (Xie and Goyette 2003). Given that assortative mating has implications for the reproduction of social inequality (Maralani and Portier 2021), our findings suggest that marital sorting on occupation may represent yet another dimension of "strategic adaptation" for social mobility among Asian Americans (Xie and Goyette 2003).

Second, consistent with *Hypothesis 2,* there is considerable heterogeneity in the occupational homogamy rates of Asian American men of distinct nationalities. Among them, Asian Indian men have the highest occupational homogamy rates (17%) and Korean men have the lowest (8%). Indeed, the heterogeneity in occupational homogamy rates among Asian Americans is larger than racial/ethnic differences among non-Asian men. Our study makes an important contribution to the assortative mating literature. Past studies on occupational assortative mating often do not consider racial/ethnic differences, and even if racial/ethnic variation is considered, Asian Americans are omitted or lumped with other groups in the "non-Hispanic other" category (Han and Qian 2021; McClendon, Kuo, and Raley 2014; Schwartz, Wang, and Mare 2021). We also find substantial national-origin differences in occupational assortative mating, reflecting heterogeneity in the educational profiles, immigration histories, marital sorting beyond occupations, and geographic distribution of Asian American subgroups. Overall, our findings underscore the importance of considering racial/ethnic differences when studying mate selection. They also highlight the importance of disaggregating Asian Americans into distinct national origin categories in studies examining the socioeconomic mobility and family formation of Asian Americans.

Third, our efforts to identify factors contributing to group differences in occupational homogamy rates reveal that potential mechanisms contributing to gaps in occupational homogamy rates vary depending on the dyadic pair being compared. Consistent with *Hypothesis 3*, Asian American men's educational advantage – specifically that higher shares of them have advanced degrees – is the primary reason they have higher occupational homogamy rates than their peers in other racial/ethnic groups. They attain higher levels of education so that they can select high-paying occupations (Xie and Goyette 2004). Their educational and occupational traits may render them more economically attractive in the marriage market (Sweeney and Cancian 2004). Those who are more attractive may sort with one another, leaving the less attractive to marry one another (Kalmijn 1998). A by-product of this process may be higher rates of occupational homogamy among Asian Americans.

High representation in the STEM occupations is another reason why occupational homogamy rates are higher for Asian American men than for their peers in other racial/ethnic groups. Asian Americans may display a stronger preference for spouses with

STEM occupations than members of other groups. STEM occupations may be perceived as more desirable occupations than non-STEM jobs by Asian Americans because they are deemed to be less discriminatory toward Asians (Xie and Goyette 2003). These jobs may also offer Asian American men and women greater opportunities to interact with co-ethnic partners with the same education levels (Han and Qian 2021). The greater representation of Asian Americans, coupled with a stronger preference for partners in STEM occupations and greater opportunities to marry co-ethnic partners with the same education, may mean that occupational homogamy rates will be higher among Asian Americans than among their peers in other racial/ethnic groups. In particular, higher representation in STEM occupations explains a significant portion of the Indian/Chinese and Indian/Korean differences in occupational homogamy rates.

Asian American men's higher occupational homogamy rates also stem from the fact that they have occupations with lower shares of singles. Occupations with higher shares of singles may place demands workers that are incompatible with work/life balance. Men in such occupations may seek to marry wives in other occupations to achieve a better work/life balance, as they may need their wives to assume a greater share of household chores. It is equally possible that occupations with higher shares of single individuals may be those with limited job security and low wages, precluding workers from meeting the economic prerequisites necessary to transition into marriage. On average, Asians have occupations with lower shares of single workers than members of other racial/ethnic groups. This is a reason why Asian men's occupational homogamy rates are higher than those of their non-Asian peers.

To conclude, our study highlights the need to consider racial/ethnic inequalities in assortative mating research, including on Asian Americans, and pay attention to the substantial diversity within the pan-ethnic Asian group. Asian Americans' notably higher levels of occupational homogamy relative to their peers in other racial/ethnic groups suggest that occupational choices and marital sorting by occupation play a key role in the social mobility pathways of Asian American families.

7. Acknowledgment

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