

HOOKED ON RACE:

An Investigation of the Racialized Hookup Experiences of
White, Asian, and Black College Women

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ABSTRACT

“Hooking up” has replaced traditional dating as the preferred method of sexual development for college students. While hookups are typically seen as casual interactions, the choices made by college students of whether or not to engage in a hookup are very much informed by social pressures and inequality. Specifically, hookups hold significant racial meaning, perpetuating sexual stereotypes related to race and ethnicity. Through in-depth, qualitative interviews, this study investigates how race, ethnicity, and related perceptions affected the hookup experiences of 26 college women at the University of Michigan who racially identify as White, Black, or Asian. Interview questions asked about the women’s perspectives of their own and other racial groups, as well as about their personal interracial hookup experiences. The findings suggest that when deciding whether to engage in an interracial hookup, women considered race a salient factor in either encouraging or discouraging the hookup encounter. While long-term interracial relationships and intergroup marriages are symbolic of transcendence of racial barriers, hookups may exacerbate racial tensions. This study demonstrated how on a large college campus that promotes racial diversity, race and ethnic relations influence even the most seemingly short-term interactions, such as hookups.

INTRODUCTION

“You’re the first Asian girl I’ve ever hooked up with.” On a college campus, it is not surprising to hear a sentence similar to this one during a sexual encounter – commonly labeled as a “hookup” – between two students of different racial identities. Although the statement is often meant as harmless, it carries with it a complex array of meanings that extends far beyond the person’s racial appearance. The question then arises, in this context, why does race (or ethnicity) matter at all? Despite efforts to convince the general public that American society is now “colorblind” in regards to race (Bonilla-Silva, 2003), both race and ethnicity continue to be salient factors in discussions on romantic and sexual relationships. Both the government and social stigma have prevented various combinations of interethnic and interracial relationships in the past (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995; Mok, 1999), leading to these types of relationships being seen as “crossing social boundaries” (Nagel, 2000; Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Mok, 1999; Joyner & Kao, 2005).

These boundaries intersect with sexuality in what Nagel (2003) describes as “ethnosexual frontiers,” with “ethnosexual” referring to “the intersection and interaction between ethnicity and sexuality and the ways in which each defines and depends on the other for its meaning and power” (Nagel, 2003, p. 10), and which “are constantly penetrated by individuals forging sexual links with ethnic ‘others’” (Nagel, 2000, p. 113). However, while the literature has grown concerning interethnic and interracial dating in comparison to marriages (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995), research regarding intergroup sexual activity, particularly at the college level, is less available. With the recently increasing interest in college “hookup culture,” and the evidence that ethnicity is closely tied with sexuality (Nagel, 2000), more research is needed about the role that racial-ethnic differences play in this young adult phenomenon. This paper focuses on the

sexual encounters of White, Asian, and Black college women, to examine the roles that race, ethnicity, and their related perceptions play in these “hookups,” and to understand both why these students choose to engage in sexual relationships at all and the prominence of race and ethnicity in their decision-making.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hookups and dating in college.

Researchers have defined a “hookup” in numerous ways (Owen et al., 2010; McClintock, 2010; Glenn & Marquardt, 2001; Fielder & Carey, 2010; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000), which ultimately can be generalized as a casual, sexual encounter between two people outside of a committed relationship. A hookup may occur without expectation of further encounters (Glenn & Marquardt, 2001) or romantic commitment (Fielder & Carey, 2010), although it does not preclude a romantic relationship from eventually developing (Bogle, 2008; Brimeyer & Smith, 2012). The term “hookup” also refers to physical behavior between the participants (Owen et al., 2010; Bachtel, 2013; Bogle, 2008) that may or may not include sexual intercourse (Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000; McClintock, 2010; Brimeyer & Smith, 2012).

Recent research has examined the transition from “dating” to “hooking up” as the popular type of intimate behavior between students in college life (McClintock, 2010; Bogle, 2007). While what is considered “traditional” dating used to provide the context for teenage sexual development (Manning, Longmore, & Giordano, 2004), this practice is no longer necessary with the emergence of “hooking up” as an alternative (McClintock, 2010; Fujino, 1997). As described by Bogle (2007), changing social norms and behaviors in the 1960s rendered the formal “dating script” outdated, and led to a newer script on college campuses outlining the “hookup.” Some argue that hooking up has replaced dating on campus, since the practice of “traditional dating”

has become atypical (Bogle, 2007). However, others have claimed instead that hooking up has not replaced dating on campus (Armstrong, Hamilton, & England, 2010; Brimeyer & Smith, 2012), but rather they coexist as separate practices “since students hook up, date, and participate in long-term committed relationships at different points during their college years” (Brimeyer & Smith, 2012, p. 462).

It should not come as much surprise that “hooking up” has gained popularity on college campuses, as its ambiguity (Glenn & Marquardt, 2001; Owen et al., 2010; Bogle, 2007; Bogle, 2008) and lack of commitment are appealing to a vast number of young adults. For some students, academic and career goals are the most important aspect of college and, therefore, they may avoid, or their parents may discourage them (Fielder & Carey, 2010; Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009), from engaging in a serious relationship for fear of distraction from these goals (Fielder & Carey, 2010; Lauritsen, 1994). Hookups then can be seen as a plausible alternative for receiving sexual pleasure without having to provide the commitment required of a romantic relationship or risk losing independence or time for self-development (Fielder & Carey, 2010; Glenn & Marquardt, 2001; Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009). Secondly, certain personality traits or psychological factors may serve as predictors of a person’s sexual behavior (Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000). Students that have a fear of intimacy (Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000) are likely to prefer a hookup to a committed relationship, and those with ludic and erotic love-styles tend to favor hookups because of their game-like quality prior to engagement and because of their short-term, passionate nature (Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000). Still, other students view hooking up as either a college norm or a necessary experience (Owen et al., 2010; McClintock, 2010; Glenn & Marquardt, 2001; Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009), perhaps feeling especially pressured when peers are actively engaging in hookup culture (Bogle, 2008; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000).

Recent estimates have shown that the majority of college students have had at least one hookup experience (Fielder & Carey, 2010; Bachtel, 2013; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000). Although hookups may seem more desirable to some students than long-term relationships, this practice proves to have negative effects (Owen et al., 2010; Bachtel, 2013; Fielder & Carey, 2010; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000; Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009) on the individuals involved. However, these consequences will not be studied for this paper, as we are looking at the roles of race and ethnicity in engaging in hookups, and not the effects.

Interethnic and interracial dating and relationships.

More and more researchers are investigating the increasing rates of intergroup dating and romantic relationships. Various social theories that were originally applied to growing numbers of interethnic and interracial marriages were initially used to justify these increasing rates. One of these is the theory of “status exchange” (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995), particularly how interracial relationships may involve the exchange of one member’s high racial status for the other’s high socioeconomic status – for example, this theory stated that White women traded their “high racial status” for the economic benefits of Black men with “high class status,” and in return, those Black men gained the advantages of their wife’s higher racial status. Another theory concerning intergroup dating relates group size and mate availability (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995; McClintock, 2010; Clark-Ibanez & Felmler, 2004). Blau (1977, as cited in Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995) argues that the size of an ethnic group is inversely proportional to its rates of outmarriage; we assume that this pattern also holds for rates of dating between ethnic groups. Because Asians as a racial group are smaller than the population of Whites, including on the University of Michigan (UM) campus (University of Michigan Ethnicity Report), this

perspective would argue that Asians are more likely to engage in interracial relationships than Whites (McClintock, 2010).

Increased rates in interracial relationships could also be the result of changing racial attitudes in the United States (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995; Joyner & Kao, 2005) following the end of the Civil Rights era and increased immigration to the United States from other continents. These increased rates can also be considered evidence of cultural shifts in American thinking on the permeability of racial-ethnic boundaries (King & Bratter, 2007). While intergroup relationships serve as indicators of social barriers between racial-ethnic groups, they can also aid in the erosion of these barriers by allowing individuals to learn more about other racial and ethnic groups, and to question racial stereotypes (Joyner & Kao, 2005). This practice is perpetuated as people see others engaging in interethnic and interracial relationships and begin to view them as more socially acceptable. In general, data have demonstrated that more liberal attitudes towards interracial dating occur among men and younger persons (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995; McClintock, 2010).

However, the best predictor of intergroup relations is propinquity (Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Fujino, 1997; King & Bratter, 2007) – that is, proximity or physical closeness – to those of other races and ethnicities and being located in a racially diverse environment (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995), particularly in schools (Yancey, 2002; Lauritsen, 1994). This paper will observe some effects of propinquity, as the University of Michigan is home to a diverse range of people of numerous races and ethnicities (University of Michigan Ethnicity Report). Higher education in general is also linked to greater rates of interracial and interethnic relationships (Yancey, 2002) because the college campus provides the environment to meet and interact with a variety of people (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995; McClintock, 2010; Bogle,

2007). Social networks play an important part in the decision-making process of whether or not to engage in an interracial relationship (McClintock, 2010), with a diverse social network leading to increased rates of interracial relationships (Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004; Mok, 1999), and a racially homogenous social network causing a deterrence from these relationships (McClintock, 2010; Clark-Ibanez & Felmlee, 2004).

Interethnic and interracial hookups.

Just as the relationship between interracial dating and interracial marriage suggests that the rate of interracial unions is inversely related to the level of involvement (Fujino, 1997; McClintock, 2010; Joyner & Kao, 2005), it is justifiable to expect that the same correlation will hold between interethnic and interracial hookups and dating; that is, students will be more likely to engage in a hookup with a person of another race or ethnicity than a dating relationship because the former requires a lower level of commitment than the latter. Therefore, we can also assume that the reasons given above for college students engaging in interracial and interethnic dating also apply to intergroup sexual relationships. In comparing interracial committed relationships to hookups, studies show that the proportion of interracial dates and long-term relationships is lower than the proportion of interracial hookups (Fujino, 1997).

Attraction.

Attraction serves as one of the primary motivations for a person's attempts to initiate relationships (Berscheid & Walster, 1978, as cited in Lee & Gudykunst, 2001). The reasons why students do or do not engage in interethnic and interracial hookups are often two sides of the same coin. There are those that simply state a preference for same-race partners in sexual relationships, while others actively seek other-race partners (McClintock, 2010; King & Bratter, 2007). However, these preferences may actually stem from social and environmental influences

that dictate norms and boundaries of sexual behavior, and are independent of attraction to a specific individual (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995; Fujino, 1997). Interethnic and interracial relationships serve as a context in which to observe the importance of ascribed versus achieved characteristics in mate selection (King & Bratter, 2007).

There are a number of intergroup factors that influence individuals' perceptions of and interactions with members of other ethnic groups (Lee & Gudykunst, 2001) – “intergroup factors” referring to individuals acting on the basis of their social identities, such as ethnic and cultural identities (Lee & Gudykunst, 2001). Factors that may lead to a higher attraction to someone of another racial or ethnic group include: a higher perceived similarity with that other person, a decreased level of uncertainty concerning members of other racial-ethnic groups, and a more positive expectation of interactions with members of other ethnic groups.

These factors are also applicable to the sexual interactions between members of different ethnic groups. Riela et al. (2010) found that ethnicity is a significant predictor of arousal, and that White-Americans (53%) mentioned ethnicity more compared with Asian Americans (40%). This difference is attributed to the distinction between an individualistic society (as found in American culture) and a collectivist one (as found in most Asian cultures) (Riela et al., 2010). However, this disparity appears to diminish with the increase of acculturation – “defined essentially as change occurring as the result of continuous contact between cultural groups” (Mok, 1999, p. 105) – of Asian Americans as they grow up surrounded by mainstream American culture and receive less influence from traditional Asian culture. However, Owen et al. (2010) found that students of all ethnicities are less likely to have hooked up than Caucasian students.

Racial stereotypes can also create an interest in an interracial sexual relationship (McClintock, 2010) – in American society, people of minority racial-ethnic groups face

stereotypes not only on the basis of their racial or ethnic identity, but by gender as well. This gendering of ethnicity promotes “the image of white, middle class Americans as ‘normal’ in their gender and sexuality, and others as deviant” (Fuller, 2004). Therefore, both men and women of color are classified extremely as either hypersexual (excessively sexual) or hyposexual (below the “normal” level of sexuality), further emphasizing their sexuality in American mainstream media and society. However, White Americans are not exempt from sexual stereotypes based on their racial identity – but their portrayal by the media often promotes their “normalcy” in sexuality (Fuller, 2004) in comparison to other races or paints a picture of White beauty and power (Fong & Yung, 1995; Mok, 1999; Fujino, 1997) that attracts minority groups. Additionally, these minority groups are more likely to choose White partners over members of other racial-ethnic groups because of a racial hierarchy or preference that popular media and society ingrains in them (Fong & Yung, 1995). This may relate to the idea of Whiteness as normative and “an unexamined default racial category.” (McDermott & Samson, 2005) Many Whites do not think about themselves having a race at all, whereas minority racial groups are often forced to recognize their racial status daily.

An important point to note is the effects of implicit racism or prejudice on the viewpoints of men and women. The term “implicit” refers to “memories from past socialization or experiences that affect current thought and behavior without conscious awareness.” (Quillian, 2008) These deep and unnoticed associations with particular racial groups can create unconscious racial bias in opinions and actions. Most often racism is actually subtle, unavoidably conditioning and affecting everyone in society (Ponds, 2013). Minority racial groups are likely to be viewed negatively in terms of sexual attractiveness based on socialization against and implicit associations towards these races.

This study works to add to the existing body of literature in this area of research, accompanying the recent interest in college “hookup culture” as it has begun to flourish on campuses around the United States. Much research has been conducted on interracial and interethnic dating and long-term relationships, but it is important to note how the prominence of race and ethnicity in our society and in regards to sexuality plays a role in sexual encounters as well. With increasing rates of interracial hookups, this study investigates how race and ethnicity influence the engagement in these types of relationships, and whether this more frequent occurrence of intergroup sexual relations stems from the disregarding of race or from a heightened racial awareness.

Rather than attempting to study all racial-ethnic groups or to compare the behaviors of Whites to minority ethnic groups as a whole, this study will focus on the differences in sexual activity and perspectives of White, Asian, and Black college students. Additionally, I am only studying women, to eliminate differences inherent in the hookup experiences of men and women, considering the gendered nature of hooking up (Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009; Lauritsen, 1994; Bogle, 2008). Although a number of studies have demonstrated that there are no gender differences in hookup experiences or in the proportions of men and women who choose to hook up (Owen et al., 2000; Fielder & Carey, 2010; Bachtel, 2013), how women and men are perceived sexually varies and a sexual double standard still exists (Brimeyer & Smith, 2012), undoubtedly influencing how each gender considers hookups.

This study will not only examine the behaviors of these students, but will investigate how these college women understand race, ethnicity, and their associated perceptions to have an influence, both consciously and unconsciously, on their decisions about engaging (or not engaging) in hookups. Instead of focusing solely on the motivations for same-race relationships

(McClintock, 2010) with interethnic and interracial relationships being seen as an alternative, this paper will focus on the decision to engage in intergroup sexual activity as a phenomena within itself.

METHODOLOGY

This research paper seeks to investigate how race, ethnicity, and associated perceptions affect the interethnic and interracial sexual encounters (“hookups”) of White, Asian, and Black undergraduate women. I accomplished this goal using two methods of data collection: a short demographic survey followed by a one-on-one, in-depth, qualitative interview. From the short demographic survey, I gathered general information about my interview participants as well as numerical data concerning the number of college hookups each participant has had and how many, if any, have been interracial, allowing me to make initial observations about my sample group. After this, qualitative interviews seemed the most beneficial data collection method to acquire data to answer my research question. Because I am mainly interested in personal experiences and narratives regarding how race and ethnicity have affected the hookup encounters of my participants with reference to their perceptions on the topic, and in order to draw details and ask follow-up questions about each interviewee’s experiences and viewpoints, a qualitative interview was necessary to become acquainted with my interview participants to discuss a relatively personal subject matter.

Additionally, the terms “race” and “ethnicity” hold no strict definitions and can be operationalized in a multitude of ways. For the purpose of this study, I am using “race” to refer to categories of people created from an assumption of biological distinction based on physical traits. Using these categories, people tend to attach social meanings to physical characteristics, which either promote the privilege or degradation of certain racial groups. I employ the term

“ethnicity” to refer to groups of people separated on an assumption of cultural distinction (Kimmel & Aronson, 2009).

Sample.

For my study, I interviewed undergraduate college women at the University of Michigan that racially identify as White, Asian, or Black. I chose these sample populations for a number of reasons. First, current literature exists documenting the emergence of college “hookup culture” as a contemporary field of study. I found it reasonable to study this trend on a large university campus, such as the University of Michigan, because of its diverse population of women who engage in hookups and because their experiences may be generalizable to similar institutions. Second, I decided to include only women in my study to isolate how differences in hookup encounters faced by my participants may be based on race, rather than on gender expectancies and viewpoints in hookups. As discussed earlier, due to the gendered experience of hookups (Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009; Lauritsen, 1994; Bogle, 2008), men and women’s encounters with race in hookups may differ, and so I chose to focus on only the experiences of women. While we often assume that men hold the power in relationships, the lack of significant differences in the proportions of men and women who have engaged in hookups may reveal a parting from “traditional” gender roles as well as demonstrate the control women hold to dictate their sexual encounters. Third, I restricted my study to women who identify as heterosexual for simplicity purposes and to focus on the experiences of this particular population. Future research on this topic should compare the findings of this paper with the perceptions and experiences of women with different sexual identities. Finally, I elected to focus on the three racial groups of Whites, Asians, and Blacks, at the University of Michigan to identify their unique experiences on

a campus that often promotes itself as “diverse,” and how this has affected their hookup experiences.

Interview participants were recruited primarily through snowball sampling, along with recruitment emails to various student organizations. In total, I conducted interviews with 26 participants, with 8 racially identifying as White, 8 Asian, and 10 Black. The participants are all women, heterosexual, and undergraduate students at the University of Michigan, and each racial group contains a distribution from freshmen to fourth- or fifth-year seniors. Additionally, all participants were required to be born and raised in the United States, to eliminate confounding factors that could be created from interviewing international students, who may understand race, ethnicity, and sexuality in a different context than students raised in the United States. I obtained IRB approval prior to conducting interviews.

Survey and Interview Content.

As stated before, a short demographic survey was given to each participant at the beginning of the interview session. This survey included questions concerning the participant’s race (and ethnic group if they racially identify as “Asian”), year in college, how many college hookups they have engaged in, whether they have engaged in an interracial hookup, an estimated percentage of their hookups that were interracial, and information about whether or not their most recent hookup encounter was interracial. (All survey data can be found in Appendix G.)

I then began the interview portion by showing the participant a composite of photographs picturing a number of men, two from each of the racial groups White, Black, Asian, and Latino; the pictures were drawn from the Internet and the men appear to be the age of a typical undergraduate college student (see Appendix B). I asked the interviewee to rank the men in the pictures from 1 to 8, with 1 being the person they would most likely hook up with and 8 being

the person they would least likely hook up with. I then asked the participant questions about the rankings, namely the pictures ranked first and last, regarding what characteristics made the men pictured the ones the participant would most/least likely hook up with, whether the participant was aware of the race of the men, and if race was a factor in the rankings. Other questions in the interview addressed participants' perceptions of other racial groups in terms of sexual attractiveness, how the participants feel friends and family would perceive them if they were to engage in an interracial hookup, and sexual stereotypes of racial groups that the participant may have heard. Additionally, I asked the participants to describe their most recent hookup encounter (and also, if they had engaged in an interracial hookup but it was not their most recent hookup encounter, their most recent interracial hookup experience) and asked questions concerning why college students may choose to engage in a hookup, and if race and ethnicity ever has any effect on the experience. Throughout the interview, I encouraged participants to share narratives about their own personal experiences and those of friends regarding race and ethnicity in relation to hookups.

Data Collection.

Interviews were scheduled with participants through email, and all interviews took place in either a private classroom in Mason Hall or a study room in the Shapiro Undergraduate Library. Interviews began with a few minutes of casual conversation before I asked participants to sign a consent form and then complete the short demographic survey. All interviews were audiotaped. Demographic surveys, picture composites, and interview audio files were all labeled with corresponding numbers as well as a "W," "A," or "B," for notation of racial group. Interviews were then transcribed. Identifiers were removed from all interview materials as participants were given pseudonyms.

Analysis.

Data provided in the demographic surveys measured the number of members of each racial group, ethnic group, and year in school. I also used the data provided in the surveys to calculate the mean number of college hookups of participants, the average percentage of interracial hookups, and to note the race of the other person in each participant's most recent hookup encounter; these statistics were then stratified by racial group for comparison.

After taking notes on all interview transcripts, I coded transcripts using NVivo to find emerging themes and patterns. I developed codes first using the questions asked in my interviews, and then combined those codes that related to a common theme, or further and more specifically coded those that seemed too broad. I then created memos that were used to outline potential patterns for analysis.

Limitations.

This research is limited in its generalization for a few reasons. First, because of the voluntary nature of the recruitment process, it is very likely that the students that contacted me about participating in my research study are those that are particularly interested in the topics of race, ethnicity, and sexuality, or that have engaged in an interracial or interethnic hookup. Because my sample is not random, it does not serve as an accurate representation of the entire population at the University of Michigan. Additionally, although there may be consistent themes throughout the interviews in my analysis, limitations on my data due to a small total sample size should still be considered. Second, there are a myriad of factors that could influence a participant's views on this particular topic, one namely being parents' opinions and childhood experiences. Although each of these issues is briefly addressed in the interviews, details such as how long a participant's parents have lived in the United States, parents' attitudes towards their

child's sexuality, and the racial makeup of the participant's childhood neighborhood or school, could all be underestimated in having an effect on the participant's responses. Nonetheless, this study provides new information on the topics of college hookup culture, sexual development, and race and ethnic relations, and their intersections. Small, in-depth studies can be utilized to discover knowledge about particular populations and environments that can contribute to the greater body of sociological literature.

Reflexivity.

Because of the personal content to be revealed in the interviews, I tried to present myself as a peer to the interview participant, both friendly and trustworthy. I began each interview session with a few minutes of casual conversation, to make the interviewing process seem less formal and more similar to an exchange between friends. I believe that I succeeded in this regard, as my participants would often make jokes or talk in an informal, laid-back manner. However, although I emphasized throughout the interview that there was no "right" answer to any question, numerous participants still expressed concern that their responses were not socially or politically "correct," and that I may judge them for making such comments. In addition, although the participants treated me as a peer throughout the interview, I do believe that my physical appearance and my identification as Asian affected a couple of participants, as expressed in statements such as "No offense to you, but I'm not attracted to Asian guys." These comments were made by women from other racial groups and serve as additional evidence of how salient race is for students on campus. In these instances, I reminded the woman again that there was no "right" answer to any of my questions. However, despite this awareness of my race as the interviewer, I do not believe that this inherently hindered any participant from expressing their true opinions in their interview responses.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

I set out to investigate the extent to which race, ethnicity, and related perceptions affect the interethnic and interracial sexual encounters, or “hookups,” of White, Asian, and Black college women. With the transition from traditional dating to hooking up as the context for sexual development on college campuses, and with a hookup serving as a possible precursor to a committed, romantic relationship, it is important to examine the reasons why women choose to engage or not engage in these short-term, sexual encounters, including those reasons motivated by race and ethnicity. Through analysis of the data, it is evident that the effects of race, ethnicity, and perceptions of racial groups in hookup experiences vary greatly across individuals but that they unquestionably factor into the decision of whether or not to engage in a hookup. Past experiences with particular racial groups as well as their university context and community shape students’ hookup decisions and explanations. This analysis ultimately explains how the hookup experiences of college women are rooted in both how they perceive and are perceived by others ethnically and racially. Conventional wisdom suggests that women decide to hook up based on mutual physical attraction, but my research demonstrates that race and ethnicity are inextricably linked to perceptions of sexual attractiveness. Moreover, it is not only how the participant perceives other racial groups but also how she believes she will be regarded for engaging in an interracial or interethnic sexual encounter that informs her decision-making.

I. Hookup Experience Demographics.

In this section, I discuss the patterns found in the data from the demographic surveys reported in Appendix G along with an overview of how the past experiences of the women of each racial group compared to the others. All interview participants reported that they have engaged in a hookup while in college with the exception of one freshman woman who had a

hookup experience in high school. In terms of past experiences, I had the women self-report the number of hookup encounters they have had while in college as well as the percentage of their hookup experiences that have been interracial. I then found the mean value for each racial group.

Almost all of the White women in this study (87.5%) have engaged in an interracial hookup, though the same percentage had their most recent hookup with a person from their same racial group. On average, in the past hookup experiences of the White women in this study, 14% have been interracial hookups.

All of the Asian women in this study have engaged in an interracial hookup, with an average of 71% of past hookup experiences being interracial. 37.5% of the Asian women had their most recent hookup be with someone from their same racial group, while the other 62.5% hooked up with someone from another racial group (including White, Latino, and Black men).

Only 40% of the Black women in this study have engaged in an interracial hookup. These women had their most recent hookup with a man from another racial group. The other 60% of Black women most recently hooked up with someone of their own racial group. It is interesting to note that the Black women in this study have either never hooked up interracially or have *only* hooked up interracially (with the exception of one participant who has had one interracial hookup out of two hookups total). This dichotomy in experiences is discussed below.

The data from these surveys demonstrate some other interesting patterns. Asian women hooked up in general the most (average 15 hookups in college), followed by White women (8.75) and then Black women (2.7). Additionally, Asian women overall stated that a higher percentage of their total hookup experiences have been interracial. Black women hooked up interracially the least. In terms of most recent hookup encounters, Asian participants have most recently hooked up interracially. Although they have had an interracial hookup in the past, White

participants were very unlikely to have had their most recent hookup be interracial. For those Asian and Black women who hooked up interracially their most recent time, they more likely chose to engage in a hookup with a White man than one from any other racial-ethnic group.

The remainder of this chapter will provide insight into the hookup experience of a college woman, outlining her thoughts throughout the process. I begin with the starting point: in what types of situations do women first find themselves that lead to engaging in a hookup? I then answer the question: how do women decide whether to engage in a hookup and with whom? I will also address the perceived consequences or rewards women believe they will encounter by engaging in an interracial or interethnic hookup. From the data, I will look at the variations across racial groups in the answers to these questions, as well as how race and ethnicity were notable factors in the thought process. Through this narrative, I will illustrate how the choice to engage in an interracial or interethnic hookup is often a complicated decision but one that highly reflects issues of race, despite the typically noncommittal nature of a hookup as well as the promotion of racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion by many large universities.

II. Participation in Hookup Culture.

Why do college women choose to engage in hookups? Or rather, in what situations do these women find themselves that encourages them to hook up? A “hookup” is defined as a casual, sexual encounter between two people outside of a committed relationship that implies physical behavior between the participants but may or may not include sexual intercourse. Across all three racial groups, the women faced similar situations that led to engagement in their most recent hookups. These data are representative of the situations faced and choices made by

women of the undergraduate population at the University of Michigan that lead to hookup encounters.

There is a general consensus among women that there are some settings that are simply more appropriate for a hookup, and that these often shape the sexual encounter depending on the level of intimacy of the situation. This idea was best articulated by Natalie, a Black junior, who stated in regards to environmental factors that might have encouraged her to hook up the most recent time, “Probably the fact that I met him at a party, like the difference between meeting someone at a party and at a coffee shop. The environment is just a little more intimate or something. I feel like it’s easier to lead into that [a hookup], in that kind of environment, at a party.” In particular, parties, bars, and clubs were prominent locations for engaging in a hookup. However, these hookups that occurred in public settings such as parties, bars, and clubs often did not surpass “making out,” suggesting that this is the acceptable level of intimacy in a public place.

About half of the recent hookups described by participants occurred in a private bedroom, with activities ranging from making out to sexual intercourse. However, in some cases, the movement to the bedroom often followed an initial meeting at a bar or party, meaning that the participants preferred privacy for a hookup encounter that may have already been implied. In the cases where the participants met in an apartment or bedroom, it was usually under other pretenses, such as: “One time his excuse was that he came to borrow my charger in my dorm room and we ended up talking for like 3 hours. It was a Saturday and we ended up talking for like 3 hours in my bed, then we hooked up right before he had to go.” (Isabella, White, sophomore) Though these hookup experiences were supposedly unexpected, none of the interview participants seemed to be particularly shocked that being alone with a man – most

likely one in which they already had some level of interest – in a private, intimate setting led to a hookup.

By far, the most commonly mentioned influential factor for engaging in a hookup was alcohol. This included both the ways in which the participants perceive how alcohol altered their own decision-making as well as how alcohol contributed to the environment as a whole. The following quotes illustrate these effects of alcohol on women from all three racial groups:

“I always kind of thought that we would [hook up] but I wasn’t expecting it to happen that soon. But I think, I mean alcohol definitely perpetuates that.” (Ella, White, junior)

“I don’t know, we’ve always been attracted to each other, like I could always tell that. And I think I just went along with it. I don’t really remember. We were drunk.” (Harper, Asian, junior)

“I had a little bit too much to drink, so I think that was a big factor. Because normally I’m very, not closed off, but I can appear to be closed off, but when I get alcohol in my system I get a little bit looser and it’s easier for me to interact with people that I don’t know compared to when I’m sober.” (Lily, Black, senior)

“If I were sober, I would’ve stopped him. I guess it was just because we weren’t both really drunk, like I was a bit tipsy, but I could still walk, I could still talk, and my mind was fine. I was just like, no real inhibitions, and he seemed to be the same way. So I think it was just where we were at, we were both in that happy place. We’re not so drunk we’re staggering around, but we’re both not sober either.” (Addison, Black, freshman)

“I was drunk and wanted to make out with somebody, and he was the first one who would initiate it.” (Emily, Asian, freshman)

As shown, some participants credited alcohol with allowing them to be more social and to interact with potential hookup partners in a way that they would not had they been sober. In this way, some women viewed alcohol as necessary in these scenarios for a hookup to occur. However, there already seems to be an inherent connection between these types of social situations, alcohol consumption, and hooking up. Although not explicitly stated, it seems that some participants associated being drunk with the need to hook up, or correlated being drunk

with promoting hookup culture. Either this, or the women viewed being drunk as a means to escape accountability for their actions, lowering their inhibitions in hooking up.

In terms of expectations, the majority of participants claimed that their most recent hookups occurred spontaneously, either without expecting that a hookup was going happen, not knowing how far the hookup would progress, or expecting that a hookup would occur with this specific partner but at a later date (“I always kind of thought that we would, but I wasn’t expecting it to happen that soon. So yeah, I sort of expected it, but no, I wasn’t expecting it that night.” Ella, White, junior). However, despite the unexpected nature of these hookups, the participants claimed that they were not opposed to the sexual encounter, consciously being able to determine to what extent they wished to engage in the hookup. This also occurred when a hookup was not desired, as Evelyn, a White senior, describes about one of her recent experiences:

He was just getting closer and closer, so finally I was like whatever, I’ll let him make out with me, get him off, I don’t want to spend the whole night like, you know. So I pretended I was an actress, and I was just like, there’s no feelings attached, this is just what people do. And then I kind of tried to avoid him most of the night, and I kind of kissed him when he made me – not made me like forced me – but I just figured I’d go with it.

A few participants mentioned that they believed the man had entered the situation with expectations to hook up, shown in Ellie’s (Black, freshman) response to the question of whether or not she had expected a hookup was going to occur, “Earlier that night that was not my intention, but then when I went back to his apartment later on for drinks, I was like this [a hookup] is probably what’s going to happen, since it’s his apartment, we’re both having drinks, that was probably the intention of inviting me over.” But most women across all three racial groups of participants made clear that they were in control of the situation in determining the progression of the hookup, even if the experience turned out differently than originally

anticipated. Abigail, an Asian junior, stated, “I never expected to fully go to sex, but things just happened, and I was okay with it, too, because I know he respects me personally. I wasn’t expecting it personally, but I think he may have come with the intentions of hooking up.”

Another participant, Scarlett (Black, sophomore), affirmed, “The first time I did not know that we were going to hook up. I was okay with it.” And in Mia’s (White, junior) experience, “I knew that a hookup was going to occur, but I didn’t know exactly how much was going to happen, but I was pretty sure that I didn’t want to sleep with him. So I was pretty conscious of that. He probably thought more was going to happen, but I was pretty conscious that that wasn’t going to happen.”

The one exception is Evelyn, a White senior, who blacked out prior to her hookup experience and does not recall the events of the night. In reference to the experience, she stated, “I don’t really have sex with people, so it was very disconcerting that I blacked out, that I woke up in bed with a guy. I felt like shit for a lot of the weekend, but then Sunday I was like it happens, my friends were like ‘It happens.’” So although alcohol often served as a significant catalyst for a hookup encounter, and participants often credited it with lowering inhibitions, there was still an underlying desire in all situations for the woman to remain in control of herself and the experience.

The aforementioned quotations bring to light a necessary discussion of consent in a hookup experience. Some women reported that, in some of their hookups, they “just went along with it,” even when the hookup was not what they expected, they did not foresee the hookup progressing as far as it did, or if they would not have engaged in the hookup had they been sober. Even Evelyn, who blacked out and does not remember her hookup experience, eventually came to terms with what occurred and stated, “It happens.” These statements give an interesting insight

into the thoughts of women concerning hooking up and consent; it seems that if the woman is attracted to the man and she already holds some desire to hook up with him, then full consent is not needed in the encounter and the woman is willing to accept whatever happens. This is important to note because the University of Michigan Policy on Sexual Misconduct by Students defines “consent as a clear and unambiguous agreement, expressed in mutually understandable words or actions, to engage in a particular activity...Consent cannot be validly given by a person who is incapacitated.” (SAPAC: Sexual Assault Prevention & Awareness Center) and yet, these women do not hold this same definition, or disregard it.

Across all three racial groups of interview participants there was no distinct pattern in how the duration of knowing the other person affected the occurrence of a hookup. The participants chose to engage in hookups with men ranging from those they had just met (“I met him that night” Amelia, Asian, junior; “We met while on the dance floor” Emma, White, junior; “A guy came over and talked to me” Addison, Black, freshman) to those that they met through mutual friends (“My ex-boyfriend’s best friend” Harper, Asian, junior; “He’s really good friends with my friend” Hannah, White, sophomore; “I had known him before from friends” Ellie, Black, freshman) to those that they had known for some amount of time prior to the hookup (“It was a person that I worked with freshman year” Mia, White, junior; “He is my best friend, pretty much” Charlotte, Asian, fifth-year senior; “It wasn’t just a random one-night stand kind of thing, we talked for like two months” Scarlett, Black, sophomore). It appears that, in general, my interview participants were open to engaging in a hookup with a man for reasons not including having known him previously. This may be due to the types of environments described above in which hookup participants often meet, namely social settings such as parties and bars, where the likelihood of meeting and interacting with a stranger is high. However, it does seem like some

women chose to engage in a hookup with a man after knowing him and talking for some time, and that some women are not opposed to engaging in a short-term, sexual encounter with men that they consider good friends.

Although the definition of a “hookup” emphasizes the typically informal and temporary nature of these kinds of sexual encounters, the experiences of a number of interview participants demonstrated that this did not necessarily limit hookup encounters with a specific partner to a one-time affair, nor did they preclude future interactions after the hookup. Three participants, 11.5% of the sample, mentioned consistently hooking up with the same partner with whom they hooked up most recently. This continuing interaction differs from a long-term relationship in that these associations, though recurring, are purely sexual without romantic implications or commitment. Two participants, 7.7%, stated that they still converse with their most recent hookup partner. And for four participants, 15.4%, their most recent hookup partner has since become their significant other in a long-term committed relationship. It is important to note, then, that although the majority of hookups may be one-time occurrences, college women may choose to develop a casual hookup into a friendship or a romantic relationship.

III. Choosing a Hookup Partner.

In addition to deciding whether to engage in hookups at all, a multitude of factors influence with whom women are even willing to hook up. This section outlines some of the ways university women relate race and ethnicity with sexual attractiveness and how they perceive other racial groups sexually, and how this varies across racial groups. I also discuss how the participants believe they are perceived in a sexual context, as this also affects engagement in an interethnic or interracial hookup.

Results from picture composite activity.

As stated previously, I began each interview by showing the participant a composite of photographs picturing eight men, two from each of the racial groups White, Black, Asian, and Latino. The participants were then asked to rank the men from 1-8, with number 1 being the person they would most likely hook up with and number 8 being the person they would least likely hook up with. (A complete list of each participant's rankings can be found in Appendix F.)

The respondents' preferences in the picture composites varied across the three racial groups. Among the White interview participants, 7 out of 8 ranked a man of their same racial group as #1, with 1 out of 8 ranking a Latino man as #1. Two of the White participants ranked both men of their same racial group as #1 and #2, and only one ranked a White man in the bottom half of her rankings (he was ranked as #5). Those men that were ranked as #8 by White participants consisted of a generally equal mix of Asian, Latino, and Black men.

In comparison, among the Asian participants, only 2 out of 8 ranked a man of their same racial group as #1, with four ranking a White man and two ranking a Black man as #1. No Asian participants ranked both men of their racial group as #1 and #2. Additionally, 5 out of 8 Asian participants ranked a man of their same racial group in the bottom half of their rankings, and those that were ranked #8 consisted of five Black men, two Latino, and one Asian.

Finally, among the Black participants, 8 out of 10 ranked a man of their same racial group as #1, with one ranking a Latino man and another ranking a White man as #1. 4 out of the 10 Black participants ranked both men of their same racial group as #1 and #2 and, conversely, 3 out of 10 Black participants ranked a man of their same racial group in the bottom half of their rankings. Those that were ranked last consisted of four Asian men, three White men, two Latino

men, and one Black man. In addition, one Black participant ranked both men of her same racial group as #7 and #8.

From these data, a number of patterns can be discerned. First, while the White and Black participants were much more likely to rank someone of their own racial group as #1, the Asian participants were most likely to rank someone of another racial group first. Second, while the Black participants had the highest number of responses that ranked the two men of their same racial group as both #1 and #2, Black and Asian participants were the ones to rank a man of their own racial group as #8. Asians also more commonly ranked someone of their own racial group in the bottom half of the rankings. And finally, the Black participants were the only racial group to rank a White man as #8.

Respondents were then asked whether they were aware that the men they ranked as #1 and #8 were of the same or a different racial group than herself. For the most part, participants were aware of the man's race when they chose to rank him #1 or #8, regardless of if the man was of the same racial group or a different racial group. Only once did a participant state that they were not aware the person they ranked as #1 was of a different racial group and three participants stated that they were not aware that the person they ranked as #8 was of a different racial group. However, although the majority of participants mentioned their racial awareness in the rankings, it is difficult to affirm whether the participants were aware of the races of the pictured men because this study's focus primed them to fixate on race and ethnicity, or because they would have noted the races of the men pictured in any situation. Ava, an Asian sophomore, explicitly stated when asked whether she was aware that the person that she ranked as #8 was of a different racial group than herself, "I was aware of this, but I was aware of this because that's part of the study, if that makes sense." There is some level of assumption, however, that the nature of the

study did not influence everyone interviewed, at least not to a significant extent, or else all participants would have stated that they were aware of the races of the pictured men when ranking them.

Although the majority of participants admitted that they were racially aware of the men pictured, this was by no means a necessary factor in their decision to rank them first or last. For those participants who answered that race did play a role in choosing to rank a person first, the responses ranged from having a little effect to being the most important factor in their decision. It appears that the majority of participants came into the interview with preconceived notions of their sexual preferences, including which racial groups they tend to find more or less sexually attractive; they then used the ranking system with the photo composite to reflect these preferences. As Ellie, a Black freshman, confidently states, “I think it just had to do with what I’m attracted to. Like I’m primarily attracted to people of the same race as I am, so I guess it played into why I ranked him first.” For one participant, race played a major role in determining only who she would *most* likely hook up with: “I feel like the race didn’t affect my other rankings, but it affected the rankings of #1 and #2. But the rest of them there was no discrepancy, based on race at least.” (Natalie, Black, junior) Although the reasons for sexual preferences and attraction varied between participants (that will be investigated in further detail later on), this appears to be the most general explanation for how race and ethnicity played a role in the participants’ decisions to rank a specific man first.

Race similarly affected whom the interview participants chose to rank last, in the sense that it related to already-held notions of sexual attraction, or rather, lack of attraction. However, compared to how race affected the decisions to rank a particular man first, the interview participants were much more likely to state that although race did play a role in the decision to

rank a man last, it was not “of the utmost importance” (Avery, Asian, senior). In this way, it appeared that the participants were more willing to admit that race and ethnicity factored into who they found attractive, but worked to downplay their effects on who they found less attractive.

For those participants who reported that race did not affect their decisions of whom to rank first and last, the cited reasoning for their rankings, then, was how they viewed the men’s overall attractiveness. When asked if race or ethnicity was a factor for ranking a person last, various participants answered, “Not this time, no. It was just overall attractiveness to me, wasn’t that he was a different ethnicity” (Olivia, White, sophomore); “No, not really. Like honestly, I think it was more physicality” (Ella, White, junior); “No, more so I just didn’t like his face as much as the other guys’.” (Natalie, Black, junior) However, it is interesting to note that three times as many participants stated that race and ethnicity was not a factor in their decision to rank a person last than those that claimed it did not affect who they ranked first, perhaps again to downplay the influences of race and ethnicity on who participants found unattractive or would not likely hook up with. And unlike the participants who acknowledged that their current perceptions of men they find attractive might have affected their decisions in this activity, the interview participants who claimed that race and ethnicity did not have an effect on their decisions did not mention how implicitly held notions of race might have affected their conceptions of overall attractiveness to begin with.

As described above, the interview participants held widely ranging ideas about race, ethnicity, and their effects on with whom they believed they would be most and least likely to hook up. However, when asked about how race and ethnicity affected their overall decision-making when ranking the pictured men, the majority of participants reported that it had had some

effect, even if subconsciously. Again, though some participants claimed that race and ethnicity had only a subtle effect on their decisions and others acknowledged a significant influence, how conscious the participants were of these effects during the actual ranking versus afterward varied.

For example, a few participants were explicitly aware:

“It helped me when I was choosing who I put first, but it didn’t affect me when I was choosing who was last.” (Madison, Asian, senior)

“It was definitely a factor because it’s what I looked for first: a Black face in the crowd of the group of pictures.” (Zoe, Black, junior)

“I think it definitely affected my #1 and #2 choices, which were the Black guys; the skin tone and also their faces. And then after that I was just kind of like, “Well he has a cute face, and this one has a cute face, too,” and I wasn’t really thinking about race when I was going past the first two.” (Natalie, Black, junior)

These statements relate to the previously mentioned idea that the participants were ready to admit that race and ethnicity affected who they chose to rank as the men they would most likely hook up with, or those that they found sexually attractive. Important to note were the participants who admittedly ranked someone from their own racial group as #1 and disclosing that they are most attracted to people of their same race; the possible origins for this attraction will be discussed later.

For other participants, the rankings were affected by a number of factors:

“I think it affected it, definitely, but at the same time I put a Black guy second, when there were other guys of my own race. So I don’t think I’m so biased where he’s out of the question because he’s not my race, but I’m just in general attracted to people of my own race.” (Evelyn, White, senior)

“I wouldn’t say it completely affected it because the person I ranked #1 was the same race as me but the person I ranked #2 wasn’t, so I think general attractiveness played a bigger role in it than race but that race did influence it.” (Ellie, Black, freshman)

In this way, the participants acknowledged a minimal effect of race and ethnicity on their rankings, but also felt the need to explicitly make aware that although the person they ranked #1

was of the same racial group, #2 was of a different racial group, and therefore, race and ethnicity must not have played a large role in their personal rankings. These types of justifications and insinuations on being unbiased in terms of race and ethnicity will also be examined below. Additionally, in Ellie's quote above, she implies that general attractiveness and race are two mutually exclusive characteristics. However, the data suggest that these features are actually often linked for women when deciding whether to engage in an interracial hookup.

Finally, for other participants, interesting revelations concerning patterns in their rankings were noticed after the fact:

"I definitely think like, as I'm sitting here looking at it, there are two White guys in my top 3, then two Asian in my top 5, so I don't know if that was just more like me thinking I'm attracted to lighter-skinned people, I'm not sure." (Ella, White, junior)

"It actually played a big role because my top 3 were all Caucasian – I think #3 I would've assumed was Caucasian. Yeah, my top 3 were Caucasian, my next were Black, then the next were Asian, and the last one was Latino, so I clumped them by race...I think I'm just now noticing." (Hannah, White, sophomore)

"I could see that maybe subconsciously how we supposedly like people that are like us, so I'd say, I noticed that my first two are the only two Black guys, and everyone else was I don't know." (Grace, Black, junior)

"Yeah, I pretty much did it based on attractiveness, but now I'm looking at the pattern: it's Black males, then White males, and then Asians." (Layla, Black, sophomore)

These patterns allude to how race and ethnicity implicitly affected the participants, in ways that they may not have been aware of during the actual ranking process. Additionally, they demonstrate the preconceived notions held by some women of the racial groups that they find more or less sexually attractive, including in relation to each other. I discuss the bases for these perceptions in the subsequent sections.

Sexual stereotypes.

Sexual stereotypes were mentioned quite often as a reason for finding particular racial groups attractive or unattractive, whether referring to stereotypes held by the participant, by their parents, by their peers, or by society in general. The media, as expected, was mentioned as major source of sexual stereotypes through its portrayal of racial groups. Women also mentioned stereotypes spreading by word of mouth from peers. Some women did note, however, that they are blatantly aware that stereotypes are not all true, and therefore, should not be subscribed to. But this, regrettably, cannot always be avoided, and even women who state that stereotypes are probably wrong admit that they continue to pervade everyday interactions, as Evelyn (White, senior) articulates:

Just as a human being, you know our subconscious does way more than we know. So I'm sure even though I don't like to submit to stereotypes, everyone kind of has that feeling. We still are all made aware of them, and even when we know consciously they're not true, sometimes it's hard to separate that from the subconscious.

Another interesting factor in the deployment of sexual stereotypes was people's lack of experience with certain racial groups. Because they have not had a sexual experience with a particular race, women must rely on stereotypes or word of mouth from the few who have had interracial sexual experiences. These stereotypes can create generalizations about an entire racial group. So while some women do subscribe to sexual stereotypes, it is not always out of malicious intent, but rather from not having any other source to rely on. However, this reliance on sexual stereotypes implies an underlying presumption that there *are* differences between the races about which women want to be aware. And so I found it important to discuss sexual stereotypes with the women in my study and how they perceive other racial groups sexually, as well as how they believe they are perceived.

First, I asked about how my interview participants believe their own race and sex is stereotyped (i.e., White women, Asian women, Black women) to investigate reasons related to race and ethnicity of why men may want to engage in an interethnic or interracial hookup with women of particular racial groups. For the White participants, two common thoughts emerged on how they perceive themselves to be sexually stereotyped. First, as described by Olivia, a White sophomore: “I think we’re stereotyped to hook up with other people who are White. If we hook up with people that aren’t White, particularly Asian, African American, it’s frowned upon by society, by older generations mostly.” It is interesting that Olivia does not see “hooking up” as a stereotype of White women, but rather with whom they hook up. There seems to be stigma associated with hooking up with someone outside of your racial group for the White participants, in that it is viewed as engaging with an “other,” and is considered taboo. The second commonality in sexual stereotypes of White women is the term given to women who engage in frequent sexual activity.

“I feel like in college, White females can either be slutty – like they drink too much and they’re just really easy and whatever and guys can just do whatever – or they don’t go out at all and are kind of prudish.” (Ella, White, junior)

“As being slutty...all a White girl really needs to be – is stereotyped as – she’s got to be thin and super stupid and she just wants to get all the ass, like she just sleeps around. Or she’s a prude.” (Hannah, White, sophomore)

“Slutty.” (Evelyn, White, senior)

Although it was mentioned among the White participants that physical characteristics typically associated with the White race are portrayed as the norm and form the ideal “White beauty” – a detail also noted by women of the other racial groups – they implied that they still feel constrained in how they feel they will be perceived if they engage greatly in hookup culture, or, incongruously, if they do not.

The Asian women who I interviewed demonstrated in their responses two slightly different ideas about how they believe they are sexually stereotyped. The first revolved around fetishization, as Amelia, an Asian junior, stated, “I guess there’s the ‘Asian fetish’...I think for a lot of other guys it’s kind of a goal to hook up with an Asian girl.” The Asian participants more than the other racial groups seemed to be aware of a publicly prominent fetish of their race or ethnic group in American culture, and that this awareness often negatively affected their potential interracial hookups because they felt they were being viewed as an “other,” which they did not appreciate. The second allusion prominent in the responses of the participants was also related to Asian women’s level of sexual activity.

“I don’t know if you’ve heard ‘closet freak’? I’ve heard that one before, where like we’re secretly really reserved in public then just unleash all of this crazy and shock people.” (Abigail, Asian, junior)

“I think Asian females are either considered one or – there’s no middle, and everyone either thinks they’re a freak in bed or they’re a prude. I feel like everyone thinks 90% a freak in bed, but in general I think that no one thinks that there’s a middle. I think that a lot of people think that they’re either really, really innocent or like, you want to get in bed with her, kind of thing.” (Ava, Asian, sophomore)

“So I usually don’t think about that because there’s all sorts of weird-ass shit that gets mixed in there. There’s like the hot, ninja chick, like bad-ass, like bad-ass in bed, kind of thing.” (Emily, Asian, freshman)

This stereotype was really only associated with Asian women, the idea that although an Asian woman may not appear to be interested or engage in hookup culture, she must act differently in the bedroom. Again, some of the Asian interview participants mentioned that the thought of this stereotype or perception playing a role in an interracial hookup made them wary of hooking up with a man from another racial group.

The participants I interviewed in the Black racial group mentioned a number of ways in which they feel sexually stereotyped, with two common themes. The Black women expressed

more than the other racial groups that they feel their body type or image is spotlighted in sexual stereotypes. Although one participant noted the extreme ends of this portrayal (“I feel like in the media, Black women are either portrayed as being really unattractive and ghetto and undesirable or they’re some type of sex bomb where everyone’s after them, they’re like a hook or something, like in music videos.” Natalie, Black, junior), most of the participants focused on the sexual stereotype that they believe attracts men of other races: “I think people see us as the big booty girls.” (Audrey, Black, freshman) Because of what they consider to be the typical image of a Black woman’s body, namely voluptuous and curvy, the Black participants believed this translates into being a “sexual figure” that is a point of intrigue for men of other races seeking a hookup, but not necessarily a long-term relationship. Similar to the Asian interview participants, these Black women were often wary of interracial hookup encounters because they believed this stereotype might be the basis of attraction.

As evidenced by the preceding paragraphs, all women feel, regardless of their racial group, that there is at least one sexual stereotype about their group’s hypersexuality – White women are “slutty,” Asian women are “freaks,” and Black women are “sex bombs.” This trend recalls the gendered nature of hookups and how women are perceived sexually. Both gender and racial identities influence how women may be approached in a sexual encounter.

I then asked the women in this study about sexual stereotypes that they have heard about men from other racial groups. While some women reported not being aware of sexual stereotypes of particular racial groups, those women who had conceptions of sexual stereotypes across all three racial groups held generally the same notions. Interestingly, the most commonly mentioned sexual stereotypes concerned White, Black, and Asian men, the same racial groups of women in my study.

With respect to White men, I observed a lack of sexual stereotypes among the women. Abigail (Asian, junior) stated: “I feel like White men don’t have that many sexual stereotypes because they’re considered the standard and we base everyone else’s stereotypes around them and they’re the norm. So I don’t know what to say about White men, honestly.” The few other points made about White men were that they tend to “play it cool” when interacting with women, and that are deemed a “player” if they too frequently engage in sexual activity.

The overwhelming majority of sexual stereotypes mentioned by women concerned Black men. In terms of physicality, Black men are viewed as typically being bigger and more strongly built. Black men are also perceived as aggressive and dominant in a sexual setting, and often very forward in their approaches towards women. Lily (Black, senior) stated the following about what she has heard about Black men: “I’ve also heard like Black males being very sexual beings. There’s always this: Black males have bigger penises than everybody else, and like just hearing that.” In this study, comments on penis size were numerous among the women’s responses concerning sexual stereotypes, making it appear common knowledge that Black men are well-endowed and, additionally, better at sexual intercourse.

The sexual stereotypes noted by women concerning Asian men were stated in direct opposition to those made for Black men. Namely, remarks similar to “I’ve heard that Asians – the entire Asian population: Indians and Southeast Asians and East Asians – have small dicks” (Harper, Asian, junior) and that they are “worse in bed.” All sexual stereotypes mentioned concerning Asian men held a negative connotation.

As mentioned above, sexual stereotypes often provide women with perceptions of racial groups on which they tend rely due to lack of previous experiences with men of other races. Although they might not explicitly report so, it is likely that sexual stereotypes inform much of

women's opinions on who they consider sexually attractive before they even interact with men of particular racial groups. And even though numerous women report that they do not subscribe to sexual stereotypes, the presence of stereotypes in society still promotes implicit racism and the unconscious distinctions between racial groups that women often do not realize they are making.

IV. Reasons For and Against Engaging in an Interracial Hookup.

The women I interviewed reported that there are a number of factors they considered when deciding whether or not to engage in an interracial hookup, though no reason carried more weight than others in the woman's decision-making. Rather, it was a combination of features – created through both past and present personal experiences – that affected engagement in interracial sexual relations. Even before they have met a potential hookup partner, a woman has undergone a number of experiences that have dictated her perceptions of others in a sexual context. This section will outline some of these factors that affect with whom women are willing to hook up.

Past and present exposure.

My interview participants often cited past and present exposure as a reason for or against engaging in an interracial hookup, with “exposure” referring to the racial groups with which they interacted while growing up in their home, in their neighborhood, and at school, and also the racial groups with whom they tend to interrelate now in college. For all racial groups, there was a common theme that those who grew up surrounded by those of their same racial group cited this as a reason for being mainly attracted to their same racial group. This pattern was not stated in terms of animosity towards other racial groups, but rather emphasized as feeling a sense of ease around people with whom they had had the most experience. Many participants mentioned that this might come from simply being exposed to their immediate family, which is typically of the

same racial group. Other participants noted that members of their own racial group surrounded them during their period of forming “sexual preferences” (referring to an age around middle school) and that this is reason for their attraction. Middle and high schools seem to be a very important location in this regard, as most social and sexual encounters flourish among peers at school.

However, the White and Black participants in my study more frequently mentioned growing up in a community of their own racial group compared to the Asian participants, of whom only one mentioned growing up in an Asian community as playing a factor in her perceptions of sexual attraction. This pattern reflects the racial make-up of the United States and how racial groups are distributed residentially; while the majority of the country is White, it appears that Blacks are more segregated than Asians in the U.S.

Conversely, a few Black and Asian participants cited growing up in a majority White community as their reason for being attracted to that racial group more than their own, while none of the White participants mentioned growing up in an area whose population was predominantly of another race than their own (which is not unexpected, again, with the majority of the United States’ population racially identifying as White, although this demographic is rapidly shifting). For Charlotte, an Asian fifth-year senior, her immersion in a primarily White environment began in early education: “My elementary school was predominantly White, I was the only Asian girl. Asian person, actually, in my grade.” And Leah, a Black junior, explicitly stated in regards to her attraction to White men, “I just feel more comfortable around them. I understand them better, I guess you can say, than I actually do with Black men because I’ve never really been exposed to that as much.” For Asians and Blacks being surrounded by a majority White population while growing up justified their attraction to White men.

As stated before, those participants that were more attracted to their own racial group than any other did not say this as a means to denounce other racial groups; rather, exposure often related to the prominence of particular racial groups within the participants' environments. For example, Grace, a Black junior, stated, "Because I grew up in a predominantly Black community, I'm just used to being around Black people. So if I'm in a Black community and there's only Black boys around, then I tend to stick to dating Black men." This quote illustrates that sexual attraction may be related to the availability of certain racial groups in the participants' surroundings, a result of constraint rather than disinterest.

Related to availability, many participants admitted that their perceptions of sexual attraction changed after coming to UM due to a more consistent exposure to a wider range of racial groups on campus than they might have experienced in their hometowns. Summarized by Ava, an Asian sophomore, "Because I went to a predominantly White middle school and high school, I wasn't exposed to that much. But then I got here and everyone's a different race and everyone's hot, and I found myself attracted to a bunch of different races." However, while some participants utilized this new, diverse community to interact and engage in sexual activity with other racial groups, others simply recognized a change in attraction but did not act upon it.

Some interview participants used their past exposure to certain racial groups as a basis for continuing to interact mainly with those racial groups after coming to UM, despite the university's promotion of cultivating a diverse community. For the White women, this tendency typically emerged for one of two reasons: involvement in Panhellenic Greek life or the prominence of White students on campus as a whole. Evelyn (White, senior) described how being involved in Greek life has affected her exposure to racial groups in college: "Honestly, a lot of my friends, we're all in Greek life, and Greek life is majority White. It's almost statistical.

There's more opportunities." However, it should be clarified that Evelyn is referring to the Panhellenic Association and Interfraternity Council in her definition of "Greek life," emphasizing her lack of awareness about the Multicultural Greek Council and National Pan-Hellenic Council, both composed of fraternities and sororities concentrating on minority racial groups. This focus on and predominance of White students also occurs in other extracurricular areas of college life, as for Sophia, a White junior: "The people that I always hang out with tend to be a lot more White than anything, just because the groups I'm in – like I'm on a tap group which is very White, my pre-law fraternity is also pretty dominantly White. So my guess is just like, who I tend to surround myself with, but not for any specific reason, it just happens...there's a lot more White people around campus than any other race, so that also could play a role in it." Being located on a predominantly White campus, then, allows for White women to find potential hookup partners within their own racial group, simply because they comprise a larger portion of the population.

Two Asian participants described a similar situation in which they tended to surround themselves mainly with people from their own racial group. One identified as Korean American, while the other identified as Indian American. While the former generalized that she is "surrounded by a bunch of Asian people" (Harper, junior), the latter proceeded to describe how the Indian American population at UM is very close-knit, and many members tend to settle in an environment consisting of peers of their same ethnic group.

Grace, a Black junior, was not hesitant to report that she continues to engage in hookups solely with her own racial group, despite the availability of potential hookup partners of other races at UM. She stated the following about how her preferences in sexual attractiveness have not changed in college: "Coming to an environment like this where it's more a mixture, sure,

there's Blacks and Whites and Asians and everything. But there's still – you're just used to the Black community. Well I am. And so, I don't know, maybe that's why.” Many Black participants mentioned at some point in their interviews the small and cohesive Black community that exists at UM and how they have situated themselves inside of it; for those who grew up in a predominantly Black region, the feeling of needing to remain in this familiar community continued into college.

Evelyn (White, senior), who was very assured in her sexual preferences, made an interesting statement referring to her change in sexual attraction: “I think I'm more open to finding people attractive, but I'm not more open to being sexually attracted to them.” While the majority of the interview participants acknowledged that by coming to a large institution like UM they were likely to see men of other racial groups that they found attractive, this did not imply that they were willing to cross racial lines to engage in sexual activity with them. Lack of past exposure made the women hesitant to venture into interactions with men from racial groups with which they have not had sexual relations before, and many women did not feel a desire to seek interracial hookups in the future. While some participants did take advantage of the availability and accessibility to other racial groups in college, there was still trepidation among the others.

Comfort level.

Related to the topic of exposure, various participants discussed familiarity as an important factor for engaging in a hookup, and for many women, this idea of familiarity was directly related to feeling comfortable around certain people and a potential reason for wanting to hook up only within their own racial group. But although women across all races agreed that

feeling comfortable is vital in a hookup experience, how women found this sense of comfort and familiarity varied between racial groups.

For Asian women, comfort came from similarity in cultural background. Amelia, a junior, cited that she is most attracted to Asian men because of this commonality:

I guess a personal connection is way easier when you're both Asian. When I'm talking to someone else who's Asian, there's just more of a connection than when I'm talking to someone of a different race. I guess we just came from the same background, and it's a lot easier to – I don't know, I guess cultural differences are not as much between Asian people and I feel like when I'm talking to someone of a different race it's a lot harder for them to understand where I'm coming from... I think it's more the background that you come from, and for me, Asian guys are more attractive because there's just that same background.

Despite the varying ethnicities of Asian women in this study, they all seemed to believe that the experiences of Asian American college women are largely similar. This belief may be due to the commonalities in many Asian (particularly East Asian) cultures (for example, emphasis on the family over the individual, elder respect, and high standards for academics (Lau et al., 2009)), and the large number of Asian immigrants to the United States in the most recent generations, creating a sizable population of first-generation American-born Asians. For these women who may be trying to maintain a connection with their Asian identity, they believe this can more easily be achieved through relationships – even short-term ones – with Asian men. However, this is not restrictive; Charlotte, a Filipina fifth-year senior, is currently in a long-term relationship with a Hispanic man, but cited similarities in culture as an important factor for their dating:

In general, his culture and my culture tend to have some similarities, so that also helped my decision to continue to date him because he could relate. Even though he wasn't Asian, he does have the Spanish influence that Filipinos have, so that can relate to my parents. So he knows, like our cultures are very similar and the idea of respect and respect your elders and always accept a plate to eat if someone offers it to you. So he could get those and be able to relate to my culture.

Only Ava, a Filipina sophomore, did not share this desire for a common ethnicity with a hookup partner. As she explained:

There's this thing with Filipinos where we kind of have this connection. Like, you see someone and you automatically ask, "Oh, are you Filipino?" and it's like, something that brings you together for some reason. And I guess I never got that so I guess that kind of turns me off, but it's just like, I don't know, some guy asks me if I'm Filipino and automatically I'm supposed to like him more? Or something like that.

Evidently, not all Asian women feel an affinity towards Asian men. However, for those who cited familiarity or comfort as a primary factor in their decision-making concerning hookups, this sense of comfort stemmed from having a partner with a similar cultural background or experience as themselves.

For those White women who considered comfort an important factor when choosing a hookup partner, this involved both familiarity with White men as well as uncertainty towards other racial groups. The former relates to the previous discussion on exposure, as the majority of White women have grown familiar with White men in their families, communities, and schools.

Hannah, a sophomore, emphasized both of these points:

It's a culture I identify with, it's something I understand, something I'm familiar with. My hometown was 97% White, so there's some sort of comfort in it. I'm not tempted by the idea of something unfamiliar, so I don't find some big taboo – which some interracial hookups can be considered 'taboo' – I don't find that necessarily sexy. Some people get a huge stir up from it, and I'm like, 'No, I'd rather go with what's comfortable, what's familiar.'

Isabella, another sophomore, also reported that she would be more comfortable hooking up with a person from her own racial group. She stated this is because "It's who I've grown up around [White people]...and who I'm most comfortable, like, naturally most attracted to, I guess."

However, she also mentioned, "In general I feel more comfortable hooking up with someone who's White, just for my own safety." This was said in reference to her hesitancy towards

engaging in hookups with Black men, a racial group with whom she would not be comfortable hooking up. However, this quote reflects not only the stereotype about Black men and their supposed sexual aggressiveness, but also a general stereotype about Black men being threatening or dangerous. Evidently, a multitude of stereotypes can influence how women perceive any particular racial group sexually. So while there was great variation among the White women concerning levels of comfort with particular racial groups, the majority used past experiences (or lack thereof) with certain races to inform their decisions in choosing a hookup partner.

Out of the ten Black women who participated in this study, 60% have only hooked up with Black men, a percentage that is consistent with the larger pattern of low exogamy rates of Black women in romantic relationships. Naturally, many Black women cited past experiences in interacting and hooking up with Black men as the reason why they felt most comfortable around them. In addition, Black women were the only group to mention uncertainty about an interracial hookup itself, before this type of encounter even occurred. For example, Lily, a senior, stated, “It’s more of a comfort thing or knowing that, I don’t know. I feel like with other racial groups or males of different races you never know why they might be attracted to you, if it’s more of a fetish thing or if it’s more of just different attraction.” And Addison, a freshman, reported, “If a guy were to make me feel comfortable, like a White guy, make me feel comfortable about the fact that I’m Black and he’s White and not make it weird, then I’d totally be fine with hooking up with a White guy. But I have yet to meet a White guy that has done that.” This trepidation around being fetishized or exoticized was characteristic of both Black and Asian women and will be discussed further below, but only Black women cited it as possibly precluding a hookup. The one explicit exception to this trend was Leah, a junior, who stated being more comfortable around White men than Black men. Leah grew up in a predominantly White neighborhood and

school, which she cited as the reason she finds White men more attractive than men from other racial groups. However, she still stated comfort as an important factor in her choosing a hookup partner, as do the majority of Black women, whether this be with Black men or men of other races.

Although mentioned less frequently, comfort can play an important role in a woman's decision of whether to engage in a hookup. Often, this comfort extends from familiarity with certain racial groups, whether it be the woman's own racial group or other races. In this way, comfort and familiarity are inextricably linked with notions about race.

Reciprocity.

Another factor taken into consideration when some women choose a hookup partner reflects what kind of men women believe will want to hook up with them in return. This perception of who will reciprocate attraction shapes whom women find more or less attractive. In all cases, women cited reciprocity as a reason for engaging in hookups with mainly their own racial group, as they believed that men of their same race would be most attracted to them. Thoughts of reciprocity only affected a small number of White (12.5%) and Asian (25%) women in this study. Hannah (White, sophomore) stated, "Most of the time when I'm out, I always get hit on by White guys." Similarly, Harper (Asian, junior) said in regards to men of her same racial group, "If I'm realistic with myself and not just who I see attractive, but if I'm realistic with myself, like who would approach me and who I would approach, it would most likely be someone of the same race." White and Asian women, if they mentioned reciprocity at all, justified hooking up with their own racial group by stating that those men are the ones most likely to approach and attempt to engage in a hookup with them.

In this study, 60% of Black women mentioned reciprocity as a factor in their decision-making when seeking a hookup partner. However, though many said that they believe Black men are most likely to find them attractive in return, this was often stated in juxtaposition to the perception that men of other racial groups would likely not find Black women attractive. This view is demonstrated in the following quotes:

“I think a lot of my friends here especially are Black girls, and I think a lot of them have said, ‘Yeah, we’re attracted to White guys,’ but they also feel like White guys won’t approach us...we’re more attracted to Black guys because Black guys are more attracted to us, and we’re less attracted to White guys because White guys are less attracted to us.” (Scarlett, sophomore)

(In reference to ranking men of her same racial group #1 and #2 in the picture composite exercise:) “I mean they’re both really cute, but like I said before, it’s not likely for another race to necessarily want to date me back, so it was ‘go for what you already know, who will be more interested,’ I guess. It was thinking more in depth.” (Audrey, freshman)

“I’ve never hooked up with somebody who’s outside of my race, so like a Caucasian male, and then they also seem like the least likely to hook up with me, so I guess a mutual thing. Like he’s not going to hook up with me so I’m not going to think about hooking up with him.” (Ellie, freshman)

For a Black woman, even the possibility of a man from another racial group not being attracted to or interested in her was enough for her to perceive other racial groups as less sexually attractive, as the supposed potential for a hookup decreases. This notion is particularly interesting at the University of Michigan, which promotes itself as racially diverse but is known for having a very tight-knit Black community, demonstrated recently in a series of campus events and discussions regarding the racial distribution of students at the university. This concern about reciprocity, then, may not only be applicable to Black women and how they are viewed sexually, but perhaps can be translated into how Black students feel they are received (or not) by other students, particularly the White majority, at UM.

Curiosity.

In this section so far, I have discussed various factors that affect university women's decisions about with whom they will hook up. However, most of these have justified women's choices to hook up mainly with men from their own racial group. For those women who do choose to engage in an interracial or interethnic hookup, curiosity is often a driving force in this decision, a sense of intrigue in engaging in a sexual relationship with a man of another race.

When discussing themselves and their friends, the White women in this study were most often interested in hooking up with Black men. Most times this was related to some sexual stereotype attributed to Black men, making them more sexually appealing. Otherwise, hooking up with a Black man was portrayed as some sort of conquest to be achieved, as Hannah, a sophomore, stated: "If it presented itself, I think if the guy was Black that would probably be a thing...I would probably do it just for the sake of doing it." White women reported that they or their friends would only be interested in pursuing a hookup with a Black man, no other racial groups were mentioned. Again, this relates to the sexual stereotypes concerning Black men and their sexual prowess, as opposed to many negative sexual stereotypes associated with other racial groups.

Black women also mentioned noticing White women's frequent interest in Black men, mainly from conversations with White friends who have shown interest in Black men. For the few Black women in this study who expressed curiosity in engaging in a hookup with a man from another racial group, they were interested in hooking up with a White man. Zoe, a junior who hooked up with a White man, said this about the experience: "Maybe I was kind of curious about him in a way. Like, 'haven't tried that before.' So I was curious."

For the Asian women in this study who mentioned being interested in hooking up with men of other races, the majority expressed interest in Black men, already having had hookup experiences with White men. This may raise the question, are Black men out of reach for Asian women, while White men are not? If so, why? Asian women also ascribed sexual stereotypes to Black men, generating curiosity around potential interracial hookups. Avery, a senior, stated: “I’ve never actually hooked up with a Black guy, but I’ve always been curious just because people who’ve sworn that they’re so much better. So I guess that’s affected me.” Reflecting my data that Asian women are most likely to hook up with men of other racial groups, they also expressed the most interest and curiosity in hooking up with men of other races.

Across all three racial groups, women were interested in hooking up with men of other racial groups because they believed there would be something inherently different about the experience compared to hooking up with a person of their same racial group. Audrey, a Black freshman, stated the following about why she thinks hooking up with a man of another race would be a unique experience:

I think we have different cultures and we’re taught to do things differently, so I think it’d just be different in general just because where we came from and what we’ve been around...I think everything would be different. I think the conversation would be different, sex in general would be different, I think it would all be different.

If the women in my study did not personally hold this opinion, they have friends who do. While sexual stereotypes about some racial groups were confirmed to women in stories from their friends, there was also acknowledgement from the women that had engaged in an interracial hookup that hooking up with a person of another racial group is often no different than hooking up with someone of the same racial group. Perhaps the interactions leading to the hookup varied across racial groups, but the physical encounter did not. Madison (Asian, senior) stated the

following about why women might be interested in hooking up with men from other racial groups: “I think people think because of their race it might be different, but I think it’s more individuals than race. Because I feel like in every race there’s going to be someone who’s good or bad, and I feel like that’s more individual differences than a racial difference.” These viewpoints bring to attention the power of sexual stereotypes in affecting women’s perceptions of men of other racial groups. If the actual hookup experience is equally variable across men of all racial groups, then what do women expect to discover in an interracial hookup? The main intrigue appears to stem from a desire to hook up with men of other races simply for the sake of doing so, to be able to tell others about the encounter, and to verify or disprove a sexual stereotype, even if the experience has the potential to defy expectations.

Parental influence.

I asked the women in this study how their parents and other family members would react to them hooking up with someone of a different racial group. Some stated that their parents would not care if they engaged in an interracial hookup, while others reported that their parents would hold strong opinions, citing stereotypes of other racial groups as reasons for hesitancy towards other races. Either this, or older family members expressed reluctance towards interracial hookups because of their large absence in previous generations.

However, in terms of how their parents’ opinions actually affected with whom they chose to hook up, the women in this study made a very clear distinction between engaging in a hookup and committing to a long-term relationship. Harper, an Asian junior, said the following about her parents’ opinions:

I really want my parents to be really close to them, whoever is my future husband, or whoever my boyfriend is, because my parents mean a lot to me, and I just see them leaning and being more comfortable with someone who’s also Asian than with someone who’s not. Like they told me they’re fine with anything, I even

asked them before, 'Do I have to marry a Korean guy?' because I really didn't want to back then, and they're really okay with anything. But from what I've seen, it just seems a lot easier when people from the same race marry.

However, she went on to say that her consideration of her parents' viewpoints changes depending on the type of relationship: "A hookup is more casual, I would say. Their thoughts don't influence me at all because it's like, 'Oh, this is not going to be anything serious.' But if it's going to turn into something serious, I would be really conscious of what they would think, and I think that plays a really big role in if I would pursue someone or not." Zoe (Black, junior) held a similar view:

Any guy who I end up dating I bring home to meet my parents, and I want them to get to know him and then we have plenty of conversation afterwards. Yes, it's very important to me. Hookup, I'm much less likely to care what they're going to think. But it's still in the back of my mind, 'Would my mom think he's attractive?' Yeah, I'm less likely to think about what they would think.

Even for the women who strongly ascribed to their parents' opinions in choosing a partner, they admitted that these attitudes matter much less in a hookup, due to their short-term, non-committal nature. Asian and Black women were much more likely than White women to mention their parents' opinions affecting who they choose to date, and possibly influencing with whom they hook up. Asian and Black women were also the only ones to mention that their parents' negative feelings towards interracial relationships precluded them from engaging in a hookup with these racial groups, because of the knowledge that this hookup would never progress into anything more than a brief sexual encounter, and she did not want to "waste her time on something." (Natalie, Black, junior)

Some interracial hookups did occur in blatant opposition to parents' disinclination towards those types of encounters. However, these "rebellious" hookups were only mentioned by White and Asian women. For White women, an interracial hookup was only considered an act of

rebellion if it occurred with a Black man. For Asian women, while they were the racial group most likely to try to please their parents by dating within their own race, they were also the most likely to challenge their parents by engaging in interracial hookups. Abigail, a junior, has been in an interracial relationship and has engaged in numerous interracial hookups. She said:

My mom always told me to only date Asian men, so that's originally who I had always wanted to hook up with sexually, but then I came to college and so many different types of people. I kind of put Asian men in the backseat... maybe it's just a way to protest my parents. Maybe it's how I make my parents angry.

Ava, a sophomore, held a similar sentiment: "I think it might also be an idea that my parents really want me to date an Asian guy, so it's been engrained in me not to go for that." It appears that although parents' opinions can have an effect on choosing a hookup partner, they play a more significant factor in committing to a long-term, romantic relationship.

Judgment from peers and society.

I asked the women in this study how their friends would react if they were to engage in an interracial hookup. The effects of peers and society on women's hookups appear much greater than those of parents, as they are more consistently present in university women's everyday lives. Across the three racial groups, women faced different responses from their friends concerning their potential or actual engagement in an interracial hookup. However, for all the women, there was a general trend that the majority of their friends tend to hook up with men of their same racial group; this led to women recognizing that it is outside of the "norm" to engage in an interracial hookup.

Although many of the women stated that they often divulge hookup experiences to their friends, it was noted that peers would likely react differently to the description of an interracial hookup than a same-race hookup. White women believed that their White friends would be intrigued and interested to hear about an interracial hookup experience. This reaction is not

necessarily negative, as Emma, a junior, said, “I think they would be intrigued. I don’t think they would be put off or disgusted by it, but I think they would treat it different than if it was someone from my own race. I think they would be like, ‘Oh, what was it like?’ or ‘Why?’ or something like that. I don’t think they would be disgusted, I think they would be a little bit more intrigued to talk about it.” A few White women believed their friends might be judgmental of an interracial hookup only because they are used to seeing White people only hooking up with members of their same racial group. However, none of the White women expressed any fear of being judged by their peers to an extent that they were unwilling to engage in an interracial hookup. But a few White women mentioned being surprised at seeing interracial hookups and relationships around campus. Mia, a junior, was apprehensive about interracial relationships because of how she believes the public will perceive her:

It is very strange for people to see interracial relationships, especially ones that they think especially don’t match, like a White and a Black person, or a Black and Asian person; it’s very unusual for people to see. And when you are openly in an interracial relationship you can receive a lot of backlash – and also good things, like some people don’t care or whatever – but it’s definitely easier to be in a homo-racial relationships. Like being in an interracial relationship you automatically think about ‘What are people going to say?’ Whether that’s good or bad, even if you don’t care, it’s like an extra thing to deal with. You know that you’re going to get stares at you when you go to the grocery store or something.

Although Mia was referring to interracial long-term relationships, there appears to be a divide among the White women between those that believe their peers and society will look at them negatively for engaging in an interracial hookup, and those that feel they would be praised for hooking up with a man of another race by their peers who are also intrigued by the idea of hooking up with men of other racial groups.

Asian women faced a mix of responses concerning interracial hookups. For those surrounded mostly by Asian peers, they felt like their friends expected them to hook up with

Asian men. The other Asian women who have more diverse friend groups said that their friends would not care if they were to engage in an interracial hookup. And only Emily, a freshman, mentioned how one type of interracial hookup could be perceived by society: “I think it’s the comical idea of the female Asian hooking up with the big Black guy, kind of thing. That’s a thing apparently. Didn’t know that when I was in high school, noticed it later on. It’s just kind of like a cultural, funny thing.” Asian women seemed less concerned about how their friends and the public would view them in an interracial hookup, reflecting the data that they are the group most likely to hook up interracially.

Black women encountered a more intense range of responses regarding hooking up interracially. Either they claimed to have a diverse set of friends who would not care if they were to engage in an interracial hookup, or friends of their same racial group would look extremely negatively upon a Black woman hooking up with a man of a different racial group. Leah, who reported being more attracted to White men than men of her own racial group, described this dichotomy in her own experiences:

So my friends [who] are different colors from me, they’re open-minded, they don’t really care. It’s more so the friends that are the same race as me that are like, ‘Oh, this is just a phase and you’re going to grow out of it.’ It’s just like, ‘No, you guys just don’t understand.’ And I understand that it’s probably because they’re from a different area; they grew up around mostly Blacks, so it’s just different to see me interacting with people of different races and they’re not used to that different...it’s very negative [reactions to hooking up with White men]. I get a lot of stares and stuff and it’s not good. It’s not good. At first I was like ‘Wow, I can’t believe it.’ But now it’s like I don’t care, whatever makes me happy. Whatever people say, it’s like whatever. And it’s kind of surprising because I thought I would get it more from people outside of my race, but it’s more people in my race that are just causing the issue, making the issue. They’re like, ‘We need to stick together’ and everything, and I’m like ‘No, let me branch out.’ Why is it expected that we be with someone of the same race? I don’t know where those standards come from.

A few Black women also mentioned being surprised at the sight of interracial couples and hookups around campus, particularly those involving Black men with a woman of another race. This type of reaction might relate to the current racial-ethnic tensions present on UM's campus and Leah's friend's comment that members of the Black community "need to stick together." But this thought process is also characteristic of many Black women in the United States who are navigating a dual identity by striving to maintain ties to Black culture while recognizing that they will have to operate primarily in White settings (Lacy, 2007). Though a number of Black people are not against interracial marriages and relationships, they do not encourage them, fearing hardship and racial discrimination in these interactions, particularly from historical relations between Blacks and Whites. In this study, there was a stronger sentiment among the Black women than those in the other racial groups that if they were to engage in an interracial hookup, this would be looked down upon greatly by their Black peers, and also, due to the lower numbers of Black women who hook up outside of their racial group as compared to Black men, they would be judged more by society. For the Black women that chose a hookup partner from a different racial group, then, they did so at high risk.

V. Interracial Hookup Experiences.

I now turn to look at the actual interracial hookup experiences of the women who participated in my study. I will look at how race and ethnicity factored into the situation, whether it had a positive, negative, or neutral effect on the encounter, and how it may have personally affected the woman participant.

Although numerous women in this study reported having a past experience in which they had gone out seeking to engage in a hookup with a man of another racial group, no woman mentioned race or ethnicity being a deciding factor to engage in their most recent interracial

hookup. If race was mentioned at all without my prompting, it was usually without strong emphasis. This trend suggests that by the time a woman reaches an interracial hookup encounter, she has already undergone the thought process described above in deciding whether to engage in this hookup with this particular man. If race or ethnicity played any role in encouraging the hookup, this occurred before the physical encounter itself.

The most prominent effect of race and ethnicity in these interracial hookup encounters manifested in the remarks made to the woman by the man concerning her race or ethnicity. White women never stated that they were made aware of their race during their interracial hookup experiences, while both Black and Asian women reported that they had been made aware of their race or put in a sexual stereotype during an interracial hookup or in another sexual context. This pattern is a part of White privilege, allowing the White women to take no notice of their own race while the minority women were forced to consider theirs.

For the Black women, they were most often made aware of their race through comments about their physical figure, “big booty,” or their abilities to dance and twerk; these remarks were never received positively, but rather with annoyance. When asked if she was made aware of her race in her most recent interracial hookup, Addison, a freshman, stated:

No, which was so nice. You get this so often, like ‘You’re so pretty for a Black girl’ or a ‘dark girl.’ That’s not a compliment! Or they try and do the whole ‘We’re thug, too!’ Why are you talking like that? And I say that, and then they go ‘Oh, you don’t talk like that. Hi, I’m Jim.’ I normally get the whole ‘We’re thug’ or the ‘You’re pretty for a Black girl’ or ‘I like Black girls.’ And I’m like ‘Okay, thanks.’ But I mean, he didn’t mention that at all, which was really nice, very refreshing. Because normally then I’m just like ‘Okay, well, he notices, that means I now have to notice.’ Pretend like you don’t notice. Even if he did, he didn’t lead onto it, so he got me.

Although only 40% of the Black women in my study have engaged in an interracial hookup, 100% reported having been made aware of their race in some sexual context by a man, an

indication of the racial oppression of Black women in comparison to the White women who were not made aware of their race sexually.

Asian women mentioned being made aware of their race through similar comments as the ones made to Addison. Emily, a freshman, stated with a sarcastic tone, “Sometimes you make out then they whisper in your ear, ‘I’ve never hooked up with an Asian chick before.’ I’m like, ‘Cool, you’re really sexy, you made me feel hot there for being Asian.’ They think it’s hot!” Avery, a senior, had similar experiences: “The guy will say something about being into Asian girls, or that I look exotic or something like that. But like, different. Or an ‘other.’” For Asian women, these mentions of race usually occurred during the actual hookup itself. In these racially charged comments, there is an implication that the men actually believe they are saying something the woman *wants* to hear. Or he mentions his attraction to Asian women or past experiences in hooking up with Asian women as a means to make the woman more comfortable about the interracial hookup situation. However, the majority of Asian women responded negatively to these comments, stating that they did not want to be made aware of their race in a hookup and that this turned them off towards the man making the remarks. This reaction suggests that women believe that intimacy is not one of the social spaces where race should matter, but the findings of this study demonstrate they most certainly do.

This analysis outlined the thought process of a university woman in deciding whether or not to engage in a hookup and also with whom. Though many women reported that they came into the study already aware of their perceptions on race and their sexual preferences, others recognized how their views and decisions had been affected by their subconscious. Ava (Asian, sophomore) acknowledged, “I mean I was kind of already aware about my preferences racially, but I don’t know. I always try to think of myself as open-minded but then it comes down to it

and I know what I do and don't want. I think this helped me reflect on that, definitely." Even for those women who reported that race and ethnicity do not affect their sexual preferences, some admitted the possibility of implicit racism shaping their opinions, an important point when looking at to what extent race, ethnicity, and related perceptions affect hookups.

The findings of this chapter demonstrate that race is indeed a salient factor in college women's decisions of whether or not to engage in a hookup. Although these biases may not be explicit, the implicit combination of past experiences, racial perceptions based in sexual stereotypes, and external influences from family and friends inform the decisions made by college women in considering potential hookups. Although many of these women noted the invalidity of racial sexual stereotypes and also disliked being made aware of their own race in a sexual encounter, it is evident that race and ethnicity are considerable factors in the hookup experiences of college women.

CONCLUSION

My study looks at the extent to which race, ethnicity, and related perceptions affect the hookup experiences of White, Asian, and Black college women. While many Americans believe that the United States has recently become a “post-racial” society and institutions such as the University of Michigan endorse their promotion of racial diversity and interaction, it is clear that views concerning race and ethnicity affect university women’s decisions of whether to engage in a hookup and with whom.

The presence of interracial hookups in the United States is continually growing. This appears to follow similar patterns in history of the escalation of interracial dating and marriage. Many women view this as social progress; while these types of relationships were once forbidden or illegal, they continue to become a more common practice in society. To some, the choice to engage in a long-term, romantic relationship with a person of a different racial group represents the transcendence of racial barriers in finding love and commitment with another being.

However, this interpretation does not exist in regards to interracial hookups. The short-term nature of a hookup encounter and its typical lack of commitment both lead women to question the motives of men who may want to engage in a hookup; this is particularly prominent for women from minority racial groups. In addition, the unique “hookup culture” on college campuses has often portrayed hookups as a sort of conquest, a trial to be achieved. In these situations, race and ethnicity are emphasized not as basic characteristics of a person, but as a basis for stereotype.

Racial lines and tensions may always exist in our society, one that claims to be post-racial but brings race and ethnicity into discussion daily. Interracial hookups may represent some social progress in that they are much more common in today's society than in previous generations, and many university women are becoming more exposed to men of different racial groups. But this also raises the question, how much interracial contact is actually happening in other settings? The willingness to engage in a sexual relationship with a man of another race already represents a step towards bridging racial barriers. However, as long as race and ethnicity serve as a motivation for engaging in an interracial or interethnic hookup, people of certain races will continue to be stereotyped. Only when hookups are discussed without the need for racial emphasis will these racial barriers begin to be broken down.

This study contributes to existing literature on college hookup culture and its intersection with race and ethnicity. It provides an insight into the thought processes of women who are deciding to engage in a hookup and with whom, and how race and ethnicity undoubtedly inform these decisions. Especially at the University of Michigan, an institution that prides itself on its claimed diversity, it is important to study race and ethnic relations in a sexual context and how these may reflect general interactions between racial groups on campus. With the assorted cultural backgrounds and upbringings held by students at UM, it would be interesting to see how race and ethnic relations affect the hookups of biracial or multiracial students. Additionally, this topic could also be researched from the men's perspective, in how perceptions of race and ethnicity affect the hookup experiences of university men compared to women.

Issues concerning race and ethnicity will remain important discussions on college campuses for the foreseeable future. Therefore, it is important to recognize how race and ethnicity affect a large facet of college life: hookup culture. It is apparent through this study that

influences of racial inequality pervade even the most intimate parts of daily life, including supposedly short-term interactions. Hookups may be argued to be fairly meaningless events; however, they have demonstrated to be sites for thinking about race, perpetuating sexual stereotypes, propagating microaggressions, and promoting exclusion. The goal of discussions on racial-ethnic relations, then, is not to overcome race or pretend cultural differences do not exist. Rather it is a shared learning and understanding of other racial groups' cultures, experiences, and views that will progress our society, and this can be found even in a short-term encounter, such as a hookup.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

1. What is your gender?

- Male
 Female

2. What racial group do you belong to?

- White
 Asian
 Black

3. If Asian, what ethnic group do you belong to?

- Chinese
 Japanese
 Korean
 Vietnamese
 Other Southeast Asian
 Indian
 Filipino/a
 Other

4. What year in college are you?

- Freshman
 Sophomore
 Junior
 Senior
 Fifth-year senior or older, but still an undergraduate student

5. Using the definition of a “hookup” as a casual, sexual encounter between two people outside of a committed relationship that implies physical behavior between the participants but may or may not include sexual intercourse, have you ever engaged in a hookup while in college?

- Yes
 No

6. About how many hookups have you engaged in while in college? _____

7. Have you ever engaged in an interracial hookup, that is, have you ever hooked up with someone of another racial group?

- Yes
 No

8. About what percentage of the hookups you have experienced were interracial? _____

9. Please think about your most recent hookup experience. Was the person of the same race as you, or of a different race?

- Of the same race as you

_____ Of a different race than you

10. If the person you most recently hooked up with was of a different race than you, what racial group did they belong to?

_____ White

_____ Black/African-American

_____ Asian

_____ Native American Indian/Native Alaskan

_____ Latino/a

_____ Don't know

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW VISUAL MATERIAL



APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

Short demographics survey at the beginning of the interview:

- What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
- What racial group do you belong to?
 - White
 - Asian
 - Other
- If Asian, what ethnic group do you belong to?
 - Chinese
 - Japanese
 - Korean
 - Vietnamese
 - Other Southeast Asian
 - Indian
 - Filipino/a
 - Other
- What year in college are you?
 - Freshman
 - Sophomore
 - Junior
 - Senior
 - Fifth-year senior or older, but still an undergraduate student
- Using the definition of a “hookup” as a casual, sexual encounter between two people outside of a committed relationship that implies physical behavior between the participants but may or may not include sexual intercourse, have you ever engaged in a hookup while in college?
- About how many hookups have you engaged in while in college?
- Have you ever engaged in an interracial hookup, that is, have you ever hooked up with someone of another racial group?
- About what percentage of the hookups you have experienced were interracial?
- Please think about your most recent hookup experience. Was the person of the same race as you, or of a different race?
- If the person you most recently hooked up with was of a different race than you, what racial group did they belong to?
 - White
 - Black/African-American
 - Asian
 - Native American Indian/Native Alaskan
 - Latino/a
 - Don't know

Oral interview

- Introduction

- I am going to ask you a number of questions concerning interethnic and interracial hookups of undergraduate college students. These may refer to your own personal experiences, but also to your perceptions on the topic. Please remember that there is no right answer, I want to know what you really think.
- First, I am going to show you a composite of photographs, picturing a number of men/women. Please rank the people in these pictures, with 1 being the person you would most likely hook up with and 8 being the person you would least likely hook up with.
- I would like to ask you a couple of questions about the ranking you just gave. Let us start with number 1.
 - What characteristics made this person the one you would most likely want to hook up with?
 - (If no mention of race and the person in the picture is of the same race as the interviewee) The person you chose as number 1 happens to be of the same racial group as you. Were you aware of this when you ranked this person first?
 - If yes: Was race an important characteristic for you being likely to hook up with this person?
 - (If no mention of race and the person in the picture is of a different race than the interviewee) The person you chose as number 1 belongs to a different racial group than you. Were you aware of this when you ranked this person first?
 - If yes: Was race an important characteristic for you being likely to hook up with this person?
- Now, let us talk about the person you ranked as number 8.
 - What characteristics made this person the one you would least likely want to hook up with?
 - (If no mention of race and the person in the picture is of the same race as the interviewee) The person you chose as number 8 happens to be of the same racial group as you. Were you aware of this when you ranked this person last?
 - If yes: Was race an important characteristic for you not being likely to hook up with this person?
 - (If no mention of race and the person in the picture is of a different race than the interviewee) The person you chose as number 8 belongs to a different racial group than you. Were you aware of this when you ranked this person last?
 - If yes: Was race an important characteristic for you not being likely to hook up with this person?
- How did race affect your overall decision-making with these rankings?
- Is the general attractiveness of a person a factor in your decision about whether or not to hook up with them?
- To you, are the general attractiveness of a person and their race related?
- Which race do you find the most sexually attractive?
 - Why is that?
- Which race do you find the least sexually attractive?
 - Why is that?
- Has who you find sexually attractive changed over time?
- Have you, and then if no: Would you ever hook up with a person of another racial group?
 - Are there particular racial groups that you want to hook up with (that are not your own)?

- Why is that?
 - Are there particular racial groups that you would not hook up with (that are not your own)?
 - Why is that?
- In the future, would you be more comfortable hooking up with a person of your same racial group, a different racial group, or does it not matter?
 - If the same racial group, why?
 - If a different racial group, why?
 - If it does not matter, why is that?
- How would your friends react if you were to hook up with a person of another racial group than your own?
- Do the majority of your friends tend to hook up with people of their same racial group or a different racial group?
- How would your parents react if you were to hook up with a person of another racial group than your own?
- Have you ever sought a hook up with a person from a different racial group? Do you have any friends who have?
- I would now like to ask you to think about your most recent hookup encounter (how do you define hookup?). Please walk me through the experience.
 - What kind of environment were you in?
 - How did you begin interacting with the person?
 - Did the two of you explicitly state that a hookup was going to occur, or did it happen spontaneously?
 - What were some of the environmental factors that encouraged you to engage in this hookup?
 - What were some of the personal characteristics of the other person that influenced your decision to hook up with them?
 - What was the race of the person you most recently hooked up with?
 - Did you consciously notice the person's race when you were deciding whether or not to hook up with them?
 - Did race play a role in your decision about whether or not to hook up with them?
 - Did the person's race have a positive or negative influence on your decision about whether or not to hook up with them?
 - (If the most recent hookup partner was of the same race) If the environment and situation had been exactly the same but the person was of a different race than your own, would you have still hooked up with them?
- (If most recent hookup was with someone of the same racial group, ask same questions about most recent interracial hookup.)
- Have you ever been made aware of your race during a hookup?
- How do you think your racial group is sexually stereotyped?
- How do you think the racial groups (that are not your own) with whom you have hooked up with are sexually stereotyped?
- Where do you think sexual stereotypes come from?
- Do you feel you've ever been put in a sexual stereotype?
- How have these stereotypes affected your interethnic or interracial hookups?

- Do you believe interracial hookups demonstrate racial barriers being broken down or do they perpetuate sexual stereotypes about other racial groups?
- Conclusion
 - I thank you very much for your time in completing this interview – you have been a great help in my work to complete an honors thesis and to investigate an aspect of college hookups that there is little previous research about. Do you have any other questions for me? Otherwise, I thank you again for your time and answers.

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION

Consent to Participate in a Research Study Race, Ethnicity, and Hooking Up

Principal Investigator: Nicole Chen, Honors Student in Sociology at the University of Michigan

Faculty Advisor: Karin Martin, Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Sociology at the University of Michigan

Invitation to participate in a research study

Nicole Chen invites you to participate in a research study about how undergraduate college students – particularly White, Asian, and Black female students – understand how race and ethnicity play a role in decisions about whether or not to engage in interracial and interethnic hookups. You have been asked to participate in this research because you are both an undergraduate student at the University of Michigan and you identify with one of these racial-ethnic groups. This study is being conducted as an academic requirement for the principal investigator in completing an honors thesis.

Description of subject involvement

If you agree to be part of this research study, you will be asked to participate in an interview. This interview will first ask you to look at a composite of photographs, and then rank the people in the pictures from who you would most likely engage in a hookup with to who you would least likely engage in a hookup with. We will then discuss your reasons for these rankings. The interview will then ask you to walk through your most recent casual, sexual experience. Questions will then be asked about that experience, including any role of race or ethnicity in the decision to participate in the hookup. This interview will last about 1-1.5 hours, and will take place privately in a classroom on the UM campus. Arrangements for interviews will take place through email correspondence with the principal investigator.

Benefits

Although you may not directly benefit from being in this study, others may benefit because this study aims to fill a gap in existing research on the relations between race, ethnicity, and sexual attraction and experiences.

Risks and discomforts

The researchers have taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. The topic and questions that will be discussed are no more sensitive than those that would be discussed in everyday life. All data and information that you provide will be kept in a privately accessed, password-protected

space to prevent it from being unintentionally disclosed, and all data will be presented in a way that will not personally identify you.

Compensation

You will be given a \$10 Visa gift card for participating in this study. If you choose to withdraw before the end of the study, you will not be given compensation.

Confidentiality

We plan to present the results of this study, but will not include any information that would identify you. There are some reasons why people other than the researchers may need to see information you provided as part of the study. This includes organizations responsible for making sure the research is done safely and properly, including the University of Michigan or government offices. To keep your information safe, your name will not be attached to any data that is presented, but a pseudonym will be used instead. All audio files of recorded interviews, transcriptions, and interview notes will be kept on password-protected networks that can only be privately accessed by the researcher.

Storage and future use of data

These interviews will be audiorecorded. All recorded interviews and the data you provide will be stored on a password-protected laptop, or on a private IFS space (protected by the University of Michigan). The researcher will retain the data for the duration of the study (about a year after the study begins). The researchers of your data will dispose of any personally identifying information by May 2014. The data will be made available to other researchers for related studies following the completion of this research study, but will not contain information that could identify you.

Voluntary nature of the study

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to withdraw early, you will be asked if the information you have already provided may be retained for the study. Otherwise, the information or data you provided will be destroyed. Deciding not to participate in an interview, to withdraw from the study, or to not answer a question will have no effect on your academic standing.

Contact Information

If you have questions about this research, you may contact Nicole Chen by phone (734-223-3433) or email (nychen@umich.edu) or Professor Karin Martin (kamartin@umich.edu).

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional

Review Board, 540 E Liberty St., Ste 202, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, (734) 936-0933,
irbhsbs@umich.edu.

Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the study. Be sure that questions you have about the study have been answered and that you understand what you are being asked to do. You may contact the researcher if you think of a question later.

I agree to participate in the study.

Printed Name

Signature

Date









APPENDIX E: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Hello! My name is Nicole Chen, and I am in the Sociology Honors cohort of 2014. I am currently recruiting interview participants to help with my thesis research. My thesis topic concerns the roles of race and ethnicity in the interethnic and interracial hookups of college students. I am interested in observing the intersections between race, ethnicity, sexual preference, and sexual attractiveness, and to see how these affect students' decisions of whether or not to engage in an interethnic or interracial hookup. I am looking to recruit females that racially identify as White, Asian, or Black, that were born and raised in the U.S., and that are undergraduate students at UM. The interview would take about an hour. All interview participants upon completion of the interview will be given a \$10 gift card as compensation. If you would be interested in participating in an interview on this topic or have any questions, please contact me at nychen@umich.edu. I would greatly appreciate your help and your insights on this little-researched topic. Thank you very much for your time!

Best,

Nicole Chen

APPENDIX F: TABLE OF PICTURE COMPOSITE RANKINGS

Name	Race								
Olivia	White	2	4	3	7	8	5	1	6
Emma	White	1	3	4	5	6	8	2	7
Sophia	White	1	5	2	8	4	7	3	6
Isabella	White	1	2	5	8	4	6	3	7
Mia	White	1	4	2	6	5	7	3	8
Ella	White	1	3	2	8	5	4	6	7
Evelyn	White	1	4	2	5	8	6	3	7
Hannah	White	1	2	4	5	6	7	3	8
Ava	Asian	3	1	4	8	2	5	6	7
Charlotte	Asian	1	2	6	8	4	7	3	5
Emily	Asian	1	2	4	8	7	6	3	5
Abigail	Asian	4	5	1	7	2	8	3	6
Amelia	Asian	2	7	1	5	3	4	8	6
Madison	Asian	2	5	6	8	1	4	3	7
Harper	Asian	2	7	5	8	1	4	3	6
Avery	Asian	1	4	2	7	5	3	8	6
Lily	Black	3	5	1	2	7	8	4	6
Addison	Black	2	8	3	6	5	7	1	4
Scarlett	Black	2	5	1	4	8	7	3	6
Grace	Black	3	4	1	2	7	8	5	6
Layla	Black	4	5	1	3	7	8	2	6
Audrey	Black	2	5	1	3	4	6	7	8
Ellie	Black	7	8	1	5	3	6	2	4
Zoe	Black	3	8	1	2	6	7	5	4
Natalie	Black	3	5	1	2	4	7	6	8
Leah	Black	1	4	7	8	6	5	2	3

APPENDIX G: TABLE OF SURVEY DATA

Name	Race	Asian Ethnic Group	Year in College	# of Hookups in College	Interracial Hookup	% of Hookups Interracial	Recent Hookup	Recent Hookup Race
Olivia	White	N/A	Soph.	7	Yes	90%	Diff.	Asian
Emma	White	N/A	Junior	10	Yes	10%	Same	White
Sophia	White	N/A	Junior	7	Yes	>10%	Same	White
Isabella	White	N/A	Soph.	7	Yes	10%	Same	White
Mia	White	N/A	Junior	2	No (interracial rltensp)	0%	Same	White
Ella	White	N/A	Junior	10	Yes	10%	Same	White
Evelyn	White	N/A	Senior	23	Yes	6%	Same	White
Hannah	White	N/A	Soph.	2	No	0%	Same	White
Ava	Asian	Filipina	Soph.	10+	Yes	90%	Diff.	White
Charlotte	Asian	Filipina	5 th -year	5	Yes	100%	Diff.	Latino
Emily	Asian	Vietnamese	Fresh.	0	Yes	100%	Diff.	White
Abigail	Asian	Korean	Junior	>10	Yes	75%	Diff.	Black
Amelia	Asian	Korean	Junior	50+	Yes	80%	Diff.	White
Madison	Asian	Chinese	Senior	5	Yes	50%	Same	Asian
Harper	Asian	Korean	Junior	5+	Yes	20%	Same	Asian
Avery	Asian	Indian	Senior	35	Yes	50%	Same	Asian
Lily	Black	N/A	Senior	2	Yes	50%	Diff.	White
Addison	Black	N/A	Fresh.	1	Yes	100%	Diff.	White
Scarlett	Black	N/A	Soph.	2	No	0%	Same	Black
Grace	Black	N/A	Junior	2	No	0%	Same	Black
Layla	Black	N/A	Soph.	2	No	0%	Same	Black
Audrey	Black	N/A	Fresh.	2	No	0%	Same	Black
Ellie	Black	N/A	Fresh.	3	No	0%	Same	Black
Zoe	Black	N/A	Junior	4	No	0%	Same	Black
Natalie	Black	N/A	Junior	1	Yes	100%	Diff.	Biracial
Leah	Black	N/A	Junior	8	Yes	100%	Diff.	White