Living Apart Together (LAT) Relationships in the U.S. Susan L. Brown (brownsl@bgsu.edu), Wendy D. Manning, Krista K. Payne, Huijing Wu

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Introduction

- **Retreat from marriage and rapid increase** in cohabitation
- Despite rise in unmarried population, nonresidential partnerships receive relatively little research attention
- Growing recognition in Europe of Living Apart Together (LAT) relationships

Rationale

- **Researchers have used various definitions** of LAT relationships—no measurement consensus
- **Distinction between LAT and dating** relationships can be a challenge
- Prior research may be confounding LAT and dating relationships

Research Goals

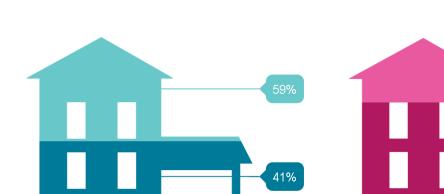


DISTINGUISH

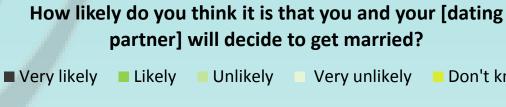
- A new measure of LAT relationship status
- **Innovative measure** explicitly models fluidity of LAT relationships
- Are LATs distinctive from daters on age, relationship duration, home ownership, or plans to marry?

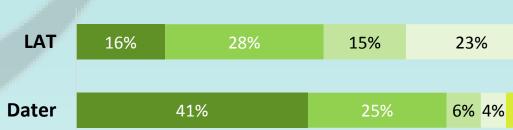
LATs vs Daters

Descriptives: Percentages within				
Relationship Type				
	Dater	LAT		
Male	44.7	48.6		189
Educational attainment				
H.S. or less	30.1	35.6		
Some college	35.3	38.7		709
Bachelors+	34.6	25.8		
Race/Ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	65.1	63.3		DAT
Black, non-Hispanic	12.5	18.7		
Hispanic	22.4	18.0		
Previously Married	21.5	32.0	RE	LATI
Child(ren) in household	21.6	25.4	60	
Metro residence	86.8	83.3	50	
Household income			40	
Less than \$25,000	14.3	35.2		
\$25,000\$39,999	15.4	17.8	% 30	
\$40,000\$\$74,999	31.5	18.9	20	_
\$75,000\$\$99,999	14.6	12.0	10	
\$100,000 or more	24.2	16.2	0	
Mean (SD)			0	0 :
Relationship dur. (years)	1.9 (0.31)	4.2 (0.54)		0.
DATERS				L

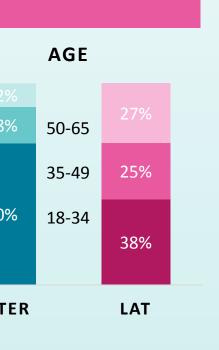


Owns home (41%) Does not own home (59%)



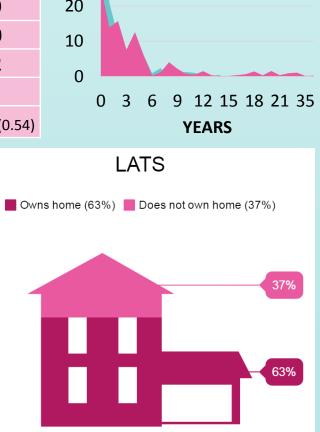


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IONSHIP DURATION

Dater LAT



Don't know 18% 23%

23%

Conceptualizing LAT Relationships

LIVING APART TOGETHER NOWADAYS, MANY COUPLES ARE IN A COMMITTED, LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP AND CHOOSE TO LIVE APART (MAINTAINING SEPARATE RESIDENCES) RATHER THAN COHABIT OR MARRY. THIS DESCRIBES MY CURRENT RELATIONSHIP WITH MY DATING PARTNER



Committed, long-term unions

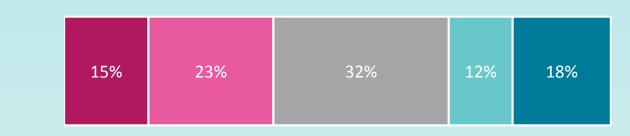
Represent an end point—unlikely to eventuate in cohabitation or marriage

LAT partners maintain separate domiciles to preserve autonomy, not because less committed to each other

LAT relationships are gaining momentum especially among middle-aged and older adults who may have less to gain from cohabitation or marriage



Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree



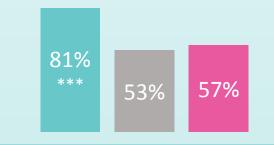
Multivariate Results

Predicted Probability of Being Very Happy

Taking things all together, how would you describe *Your current relationship?* 1. Very Unhappy \rightarrow 7. Very Happy

Zero-order Model

■ Daters ■ Ambivalent ■ LATs

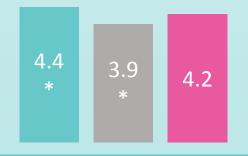


Predicted Mean Commitment

How committed are you to your relationship with your *dating partner?* 1. Not at all \rightarrow 5. Completely committed

Zero-order Model

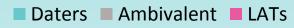
Daters Ambivalent LATs

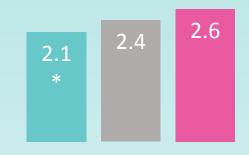


Predicted Mean Influence of Finances

How much do financial matters influence whether you *stay in this relationship?* 1. Not at all \rightarrow 5. Extremely

Zero-order Model

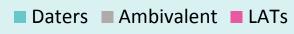


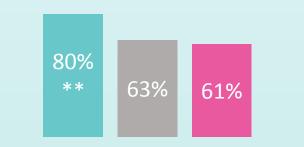




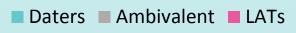


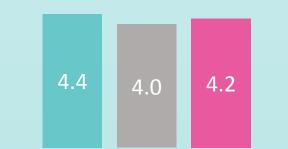
Full Model





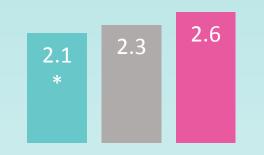
Full Model





Full Model

Daters Ambivalent LATs



Data & Sample

- Family & Relationships Survey (FRS), 2013
 - Nationally representative survey of 7,517 adults ages 18-65
 - **Designed by NCFMR @ BGSU**
 - **Collected by GfK—online panel**
- Analytic sample includes those who identify as dating or LAT (n=578)

Discussion

- Nearly 40% of daters are in LAT relationships
- LATs and daters are distinct across demographic characteristics and relationship quality
- LAT relationships are the next frontier in individualized partnerships

Next Steps

- Investigate whether LAT relationships are better conceptualized as a continuum to recognize fluidity
- Examine how LATs compare with cohabitors and marrieds, especially among older adults