

# Living Apart Together (LAT) Relationships in the U.S.

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## Introduction

- Retreat from marriage and rapid increase in cohabitation
- Despite rise in unmarried population, non-residential 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

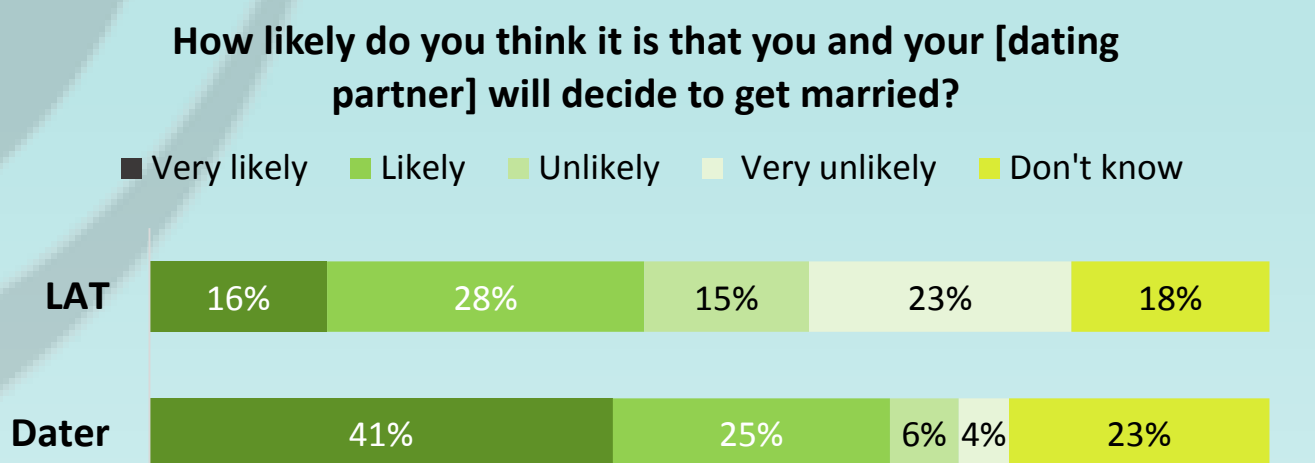
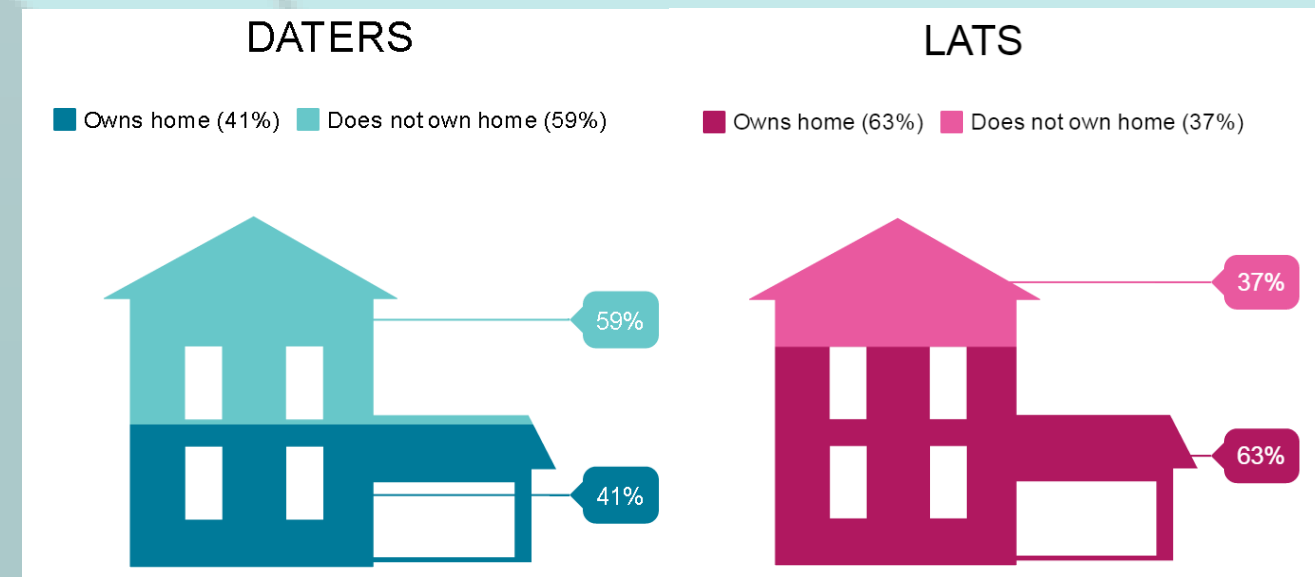
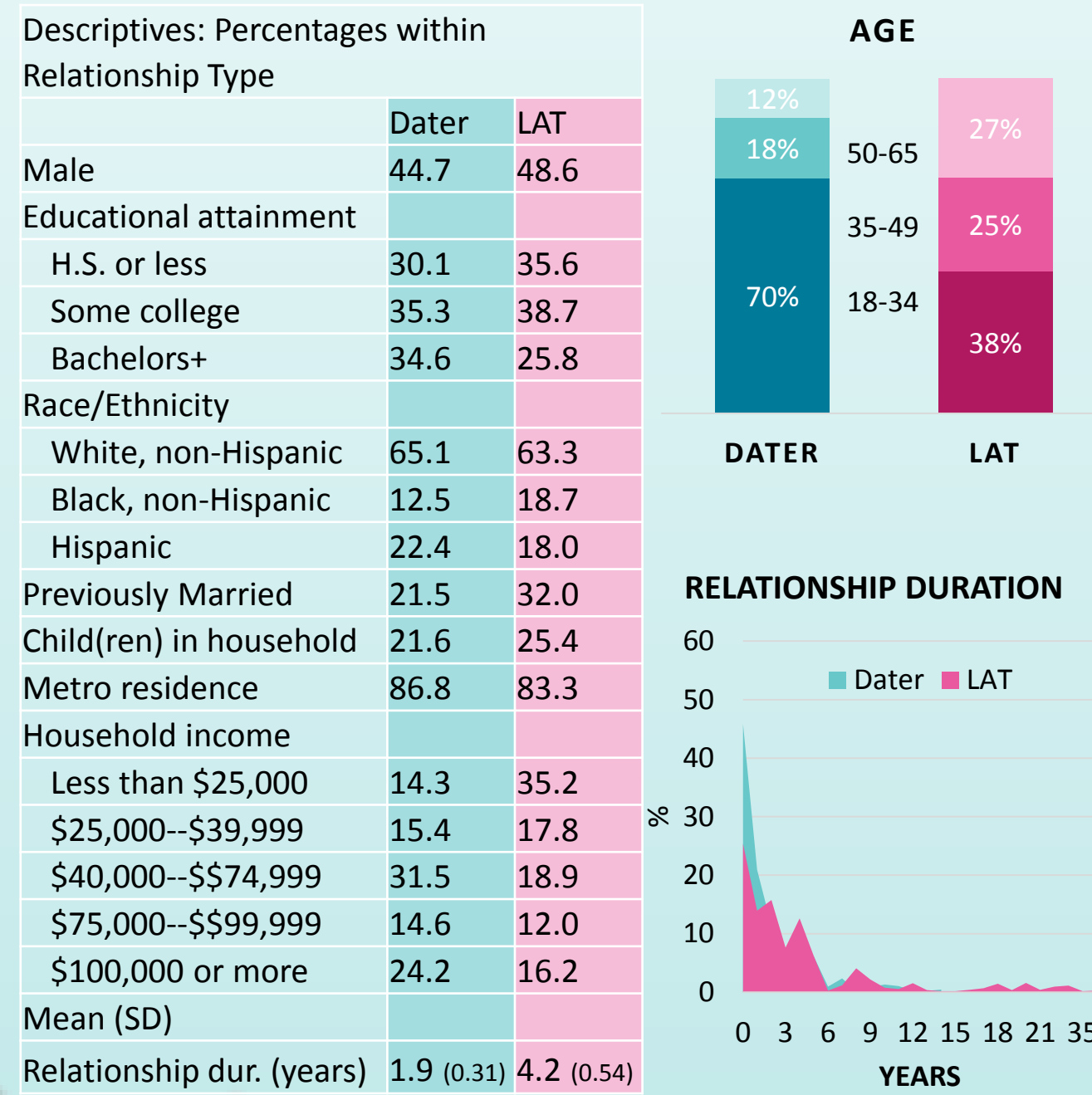
TEST

- A new measure of LAT relationship status
- Innovative measure explicitly models fluidity of LAT relationships

DISTINGUISH

- Are LATs distinctive from daters on age, relationship duration, home ownership, or plans to marry?

## LATs vs Daters



## Conceptualizing LAT Relationships



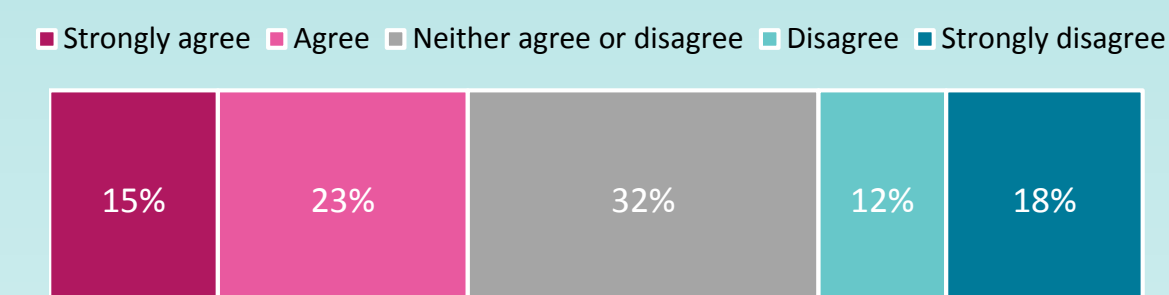
Committed, long-term unions

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

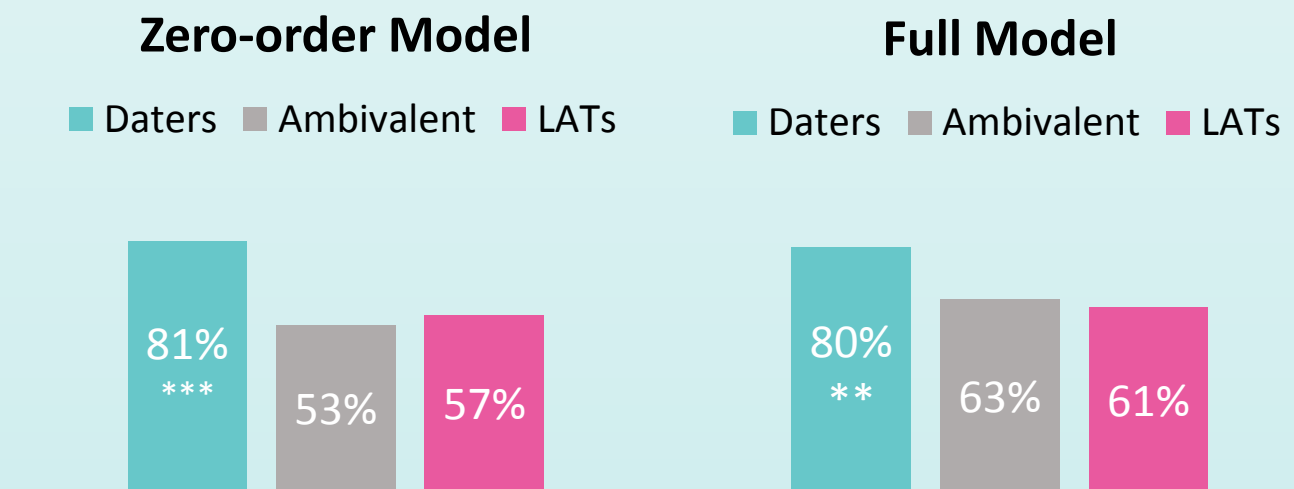
Distribution of Responses for Direct Question RE: LAT



## Multivariate Results

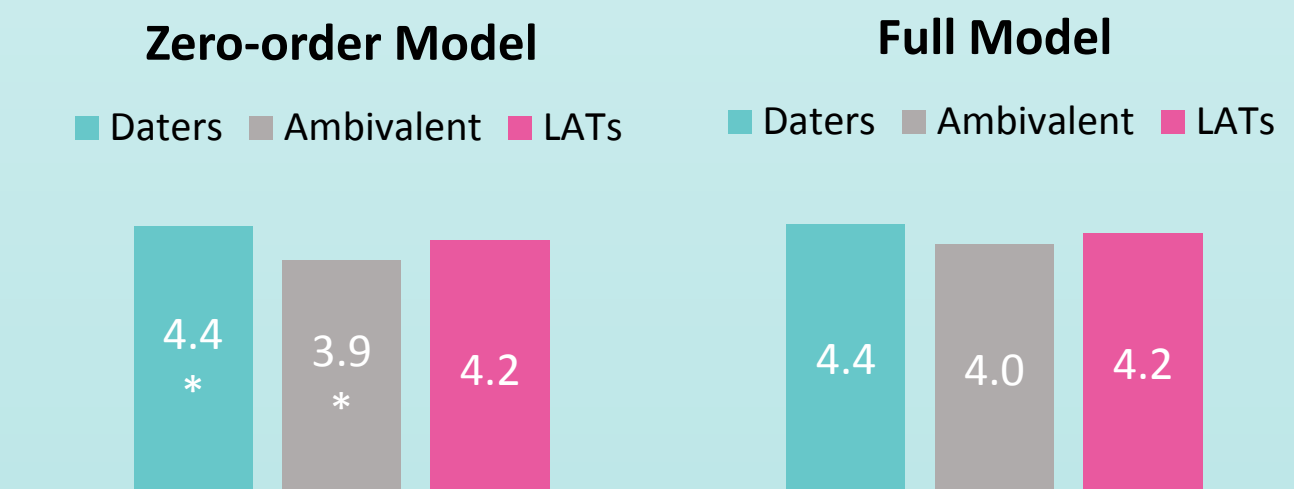
### Predicted Probability of Being Very Happy

Taking things all together, how would you describe your current relationship? 1. Very Unhappy → 7. Very Happy



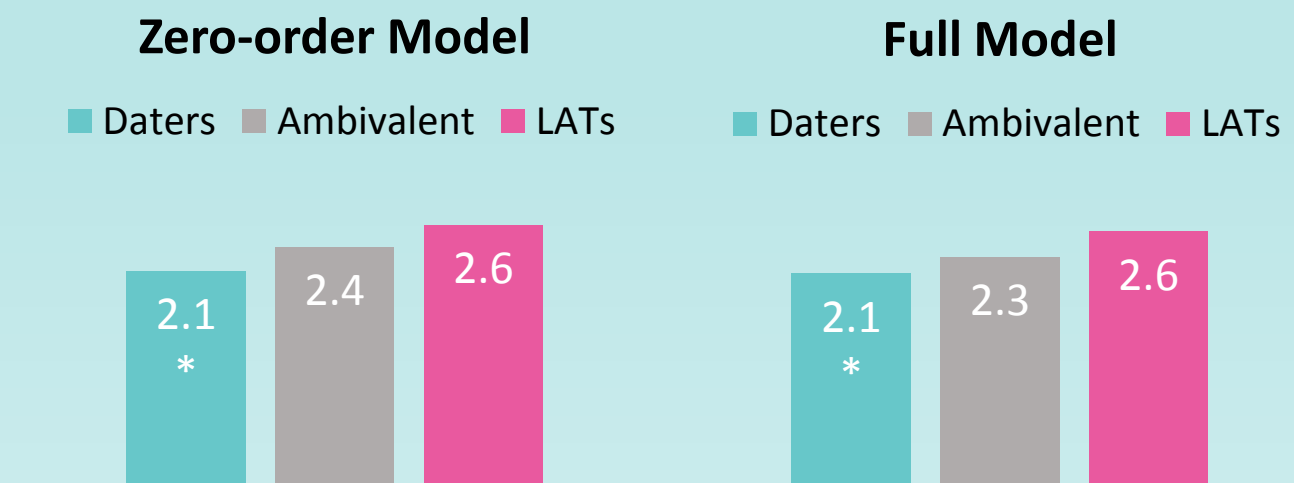
### Predicted Mean Commitment

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



### Predicted Mean Influence of Finances

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



## 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 cohabitators and marrieds, especially among older adults