

**WHO MAKES IT TO THE TOP OF THE
ACADEMIC LADDER?
CONSTRAINTS, ENABLERS, AND INTERSECTIONALITY**



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OVERVIEW OF OUR CURRENT STUDY

Recent literature suggests that higher education works to reinforce **non-Hispanic white, male, middle-class** rules and practices (Bonilla-Silva and Embrick 2005).

Our research seeks to better theorize and understand the experiences of underrepresented minorities (URMs) in sociology and economics, especially **black and Hispanic scholars from the 1995-2006 PhD cohorts**, as they vary by gender.

We chose these cohorts because **all had enough time to become Associate Professors and some had time to become Full Professors.**

We ask: Do these scholars succeed in higher education?

And: Does participating in URM networks and activities help?

OVERVIEW, CONTINUED

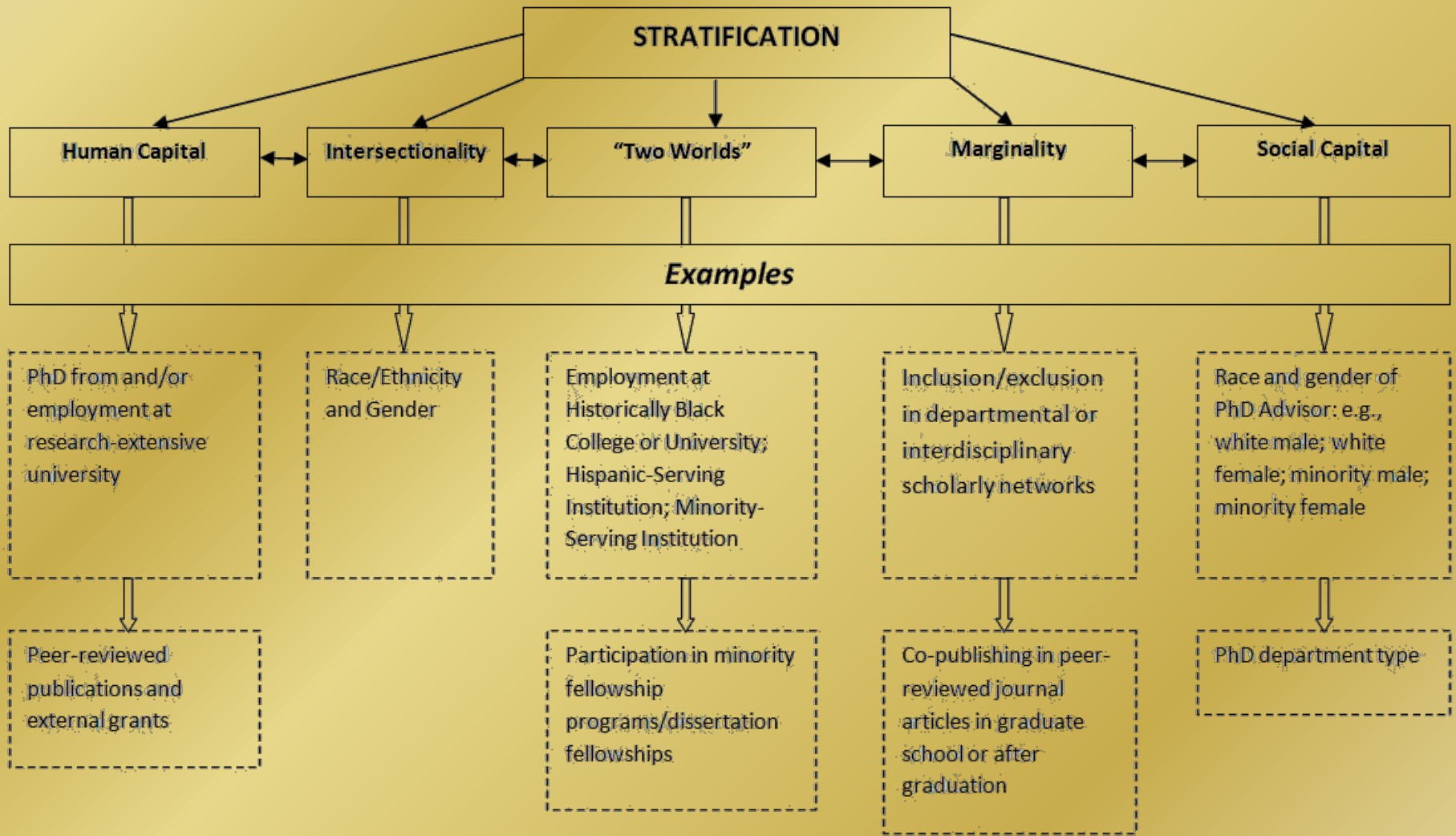
This presentation is part of a larger NSF-funded study that compares sociology and economics and attempts to **develop concepts of use to both of these disciplines.**

We measure aspects of the *stratification processes and outcomes* that may create or re-create inequalities in the academic career trajectories of URM.

The theoretical concepts to be made operational and tested include the following: **human capital and social capital** including networks and marginality; also notions of **“two worlds”** (DuBois 1903) and **intersectionality.**

Today, we emphasize aspects of **human capital, two worlds,** and **intersectionality** in the discipline of sociology.

SCHEMATIC FOR CATEGORIZATION OF CONCEPTS AND VARIABLES



VARIABLES IN THE STUDY

Demographics

Number of Black men and women, Hispanic men and women

Human Capital

Human capital is viewed as the stock of individual competencies, knowledge, social and personality attributes, and attainments embodied in the ability to perform **productive labor** (Price 2009).

- PhD from a Research I institution or not
- Academic or not in current position
- Research I as current employer for academics
- Current rank--Associate Prof. in 8 years, Full Prof. in 14 years

Social capital can affect human capital!

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the study of overlapping or *intersecting* social identities and related systems of domination or discrimination.

VARIABLES IN THE STUDY

Two Worlds (Homophilous or Heterogeneous Worlds)

URM scholars may hold onto a racial/ethnic identity within a white-dominated institution because they may be constant “others” in a situation of white supremacy perpetuating **stratification**. We hypothesize that belonging to homophilous networks may help facilitate success.

- Employed at a Historically White institution or Historically Minority-Serving institution (HBCU or HSI)
- Participant in the ASA Minority Fellowship Program (MFP)
- Member of Minority-Oriented Sections of ASA
- Teach in or Direct a Race/Ethnicity-Oriented Department
- Publish in Race/Ethnicity-Oriented Journal(s)

RESEARCH DESIGN

Unobtrusive measures: dependent and independent variables

Selected new PhDs from ASA Graduate Guide. **Panel of experts, web pages** used to determine race/ethnicity. Used existing datasets and other searches to find information.

Survey instrument and qualitative analysis

Analysis of **social networks and participation/marginality** via questionnaires and interviews; sample taken from first unobtrusive database will be completed **next year**.

Overall division of labor

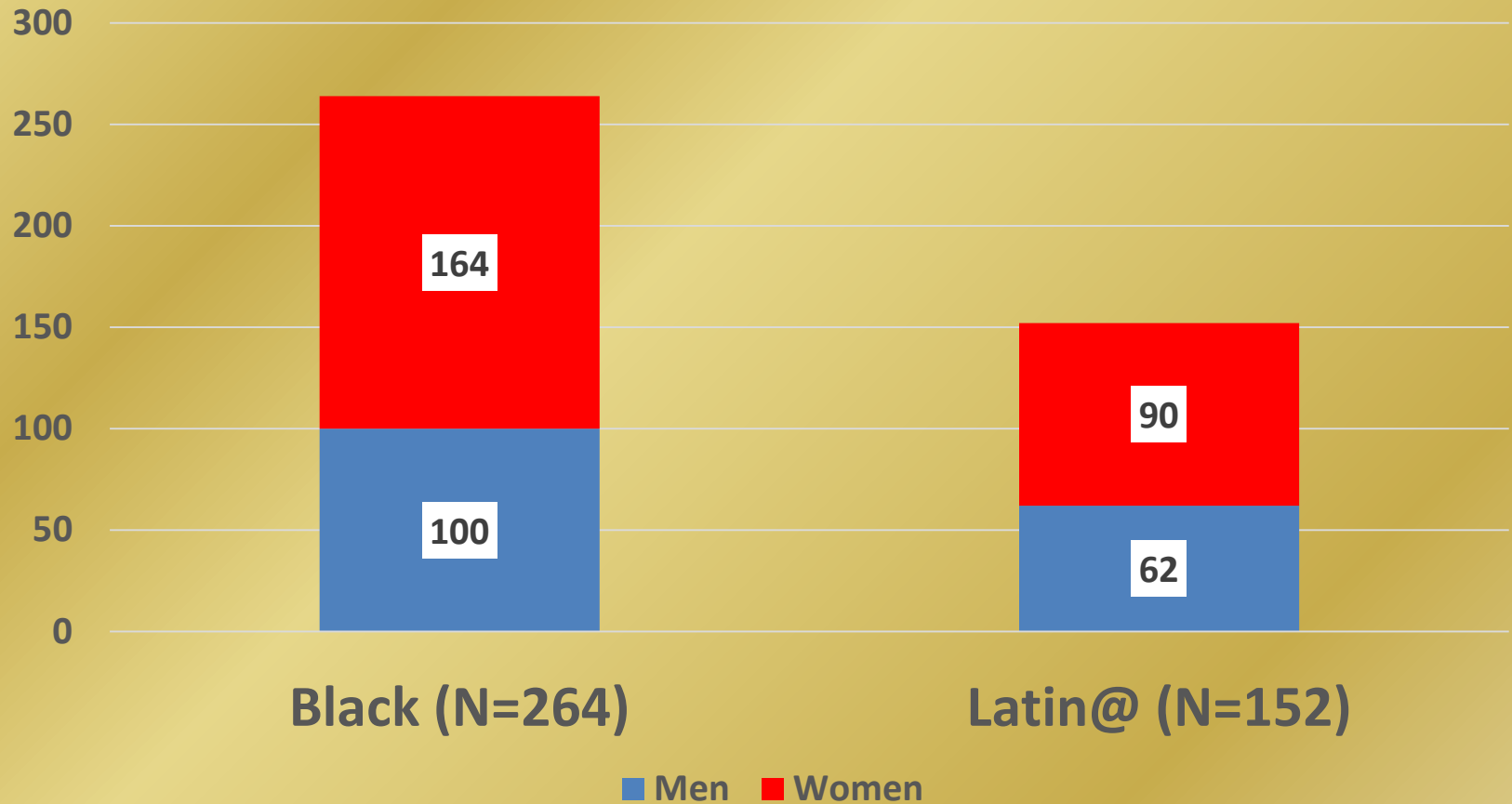
Conducted at **seven research sites** including ASA, University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley, George Mason University, Georgia Tech, Duke University, Langston University, and the New School for Social Research.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: WHO IS IN THE STUDY?

- Of the 416 under-represented minority scholars in the study, the largest group is **Black women (39%)**.
- There are smaller numbers of **Black men (24%)** and **Hispanic women (22%)**.
- The smallest group is **Hispanic men (15%)**

For the majority of this presentation, we will be looking at 290 full-time academics, including faculty members and administrators with faculty rank).

Frequencies of Men and Women by Race/Ethnicity (N=416)



FINDINGS—HUMAN CAPITAL

In this set of preliminary human capital findings --we ask whether or not an institution of higher learning is a **Research I institution** or not because **this type of institution is considered to be top of the stratification scale.**

- In 2014, about 9 out of 10 members of the entire study universe (n=416) **obtained their PhDs** from Research I institutions.
- Not all of these PhDs have become academics. **About 7 out of 10 are faculty members and/or administrators with faculty rank.** The remaining 30% were either never in academia or are no longer in academia.
- In 2014, for the 290 individuals who were full-time academics—the majority (**about 6 out of 10**) are Associate Professors, **2 out of 10** are Full Professors, and **2 out of 10** are Assistant Professors.

MORE ON HUMAN CAPITAL

- Of the 290 full-time academics, about **4 out of 10 are employed at Research I institutions.**
- Of the full-time academics who earned the rank of Associate Professor (this includes the Full Professors below), **approximately 8 out of 10** were promoted in **8 years or less** while the remainder were not.
- Of the full-time faculty members who earned the rank of Full Professor, **about 8 out of 10** were promoted in **14 years or less** and the remainder were not.
- About **2 out of 10** full-time faculty members are still at the rank of Assistant Professor.

INTERSECTIONALITY AND HUMAN CAPITAL

An initial intersectional analysis shows differences.

- **While Hispanic men are the most likely to be academics, have tenure, and have the highest proportion of Associate Professors and Full Professors, they are least likely to be administrators.**
- **Fewer Black women and Hispanic women have tenure than their male counterparts.**
- **Black and Hispanic women have fewer Full Professors, and those that earn Full Professor are less likely to do so within 14 years of the PhD, compared to their male counterparts.**
- **Black women are the least likely to have obtained tenure and the most likely to stay in the rank of Assistant Professor while less likely to be Associate or Full Professor.**

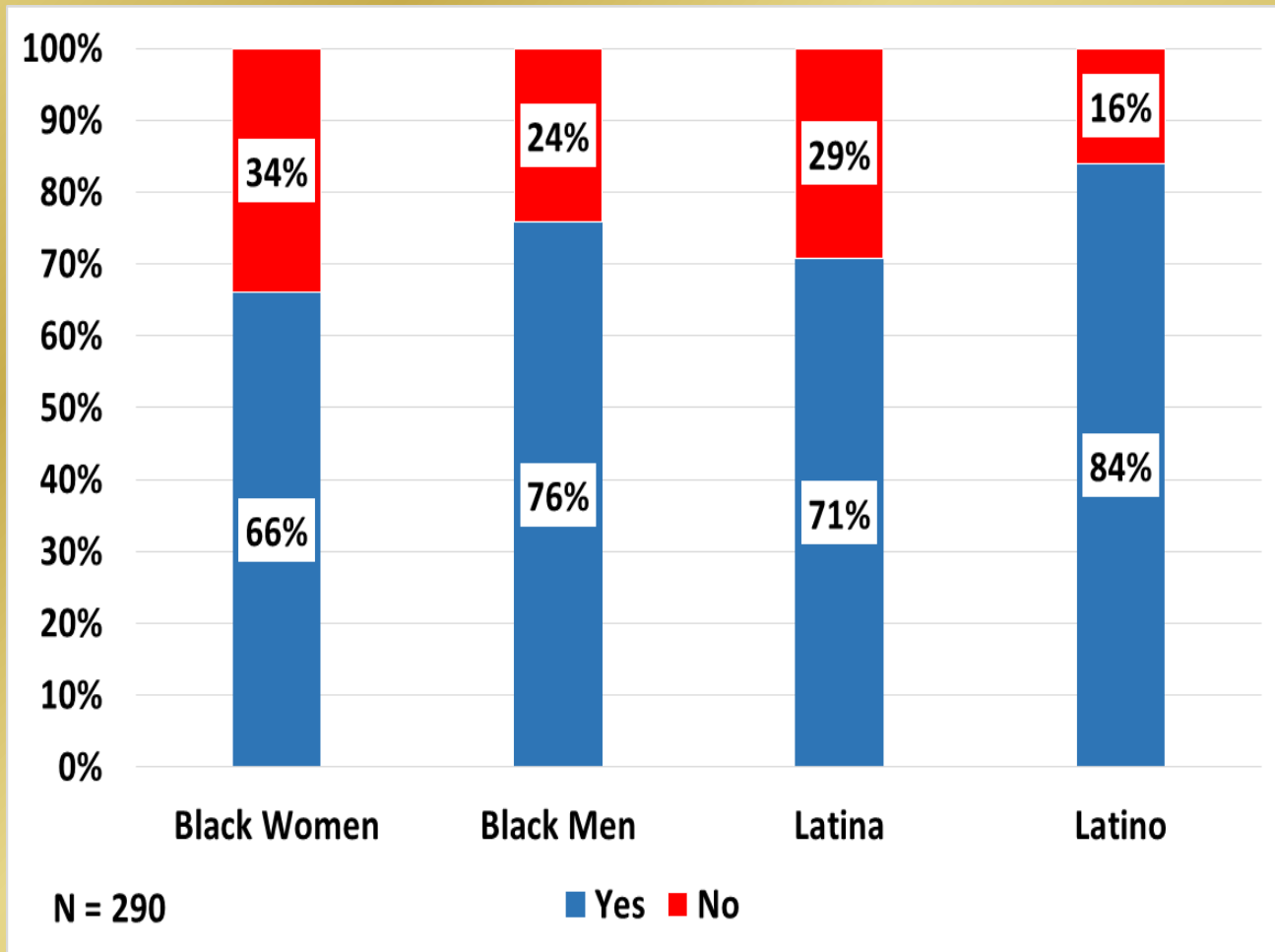
Academic or Nonacademic Status of Our Group

	Black Women	Black Men	Latina	Latino
Academic	58%	59%	58%	76%
Academic now in administration	10%	9%	10%	5%
Previous academic now in private/nonprofit sector	10%	9%	7%	3%
Never in academia	22%	23%	26%	16%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

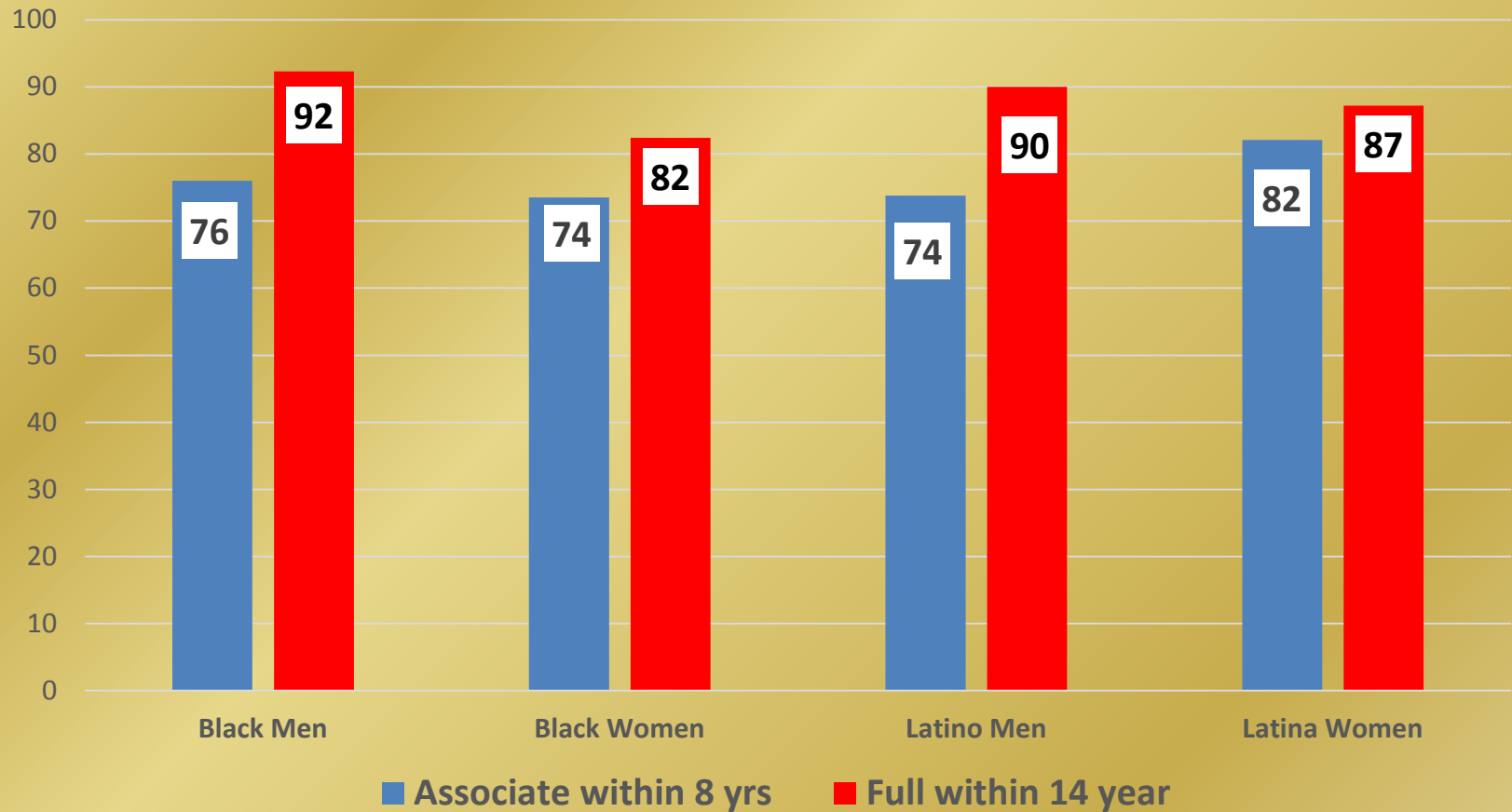
Current Academic Status Position By Race/Ethnicity and Gender

	Black Women	Black Men	Latina	Latino
Administrator not currently a professor	35%	38%	38%	21%
Assistant Professor	18%	9%	16%	11%
Associate Professor	32%	37%	37%	52%
Full Professor	10%	13%	9%	16%
Contingent Faculty	4%	3%	1%	0%

Percentage of Academics with Tenure



Percentages of Academics Reaching Associate Professor within 8 years and Full Professor within 14 Years

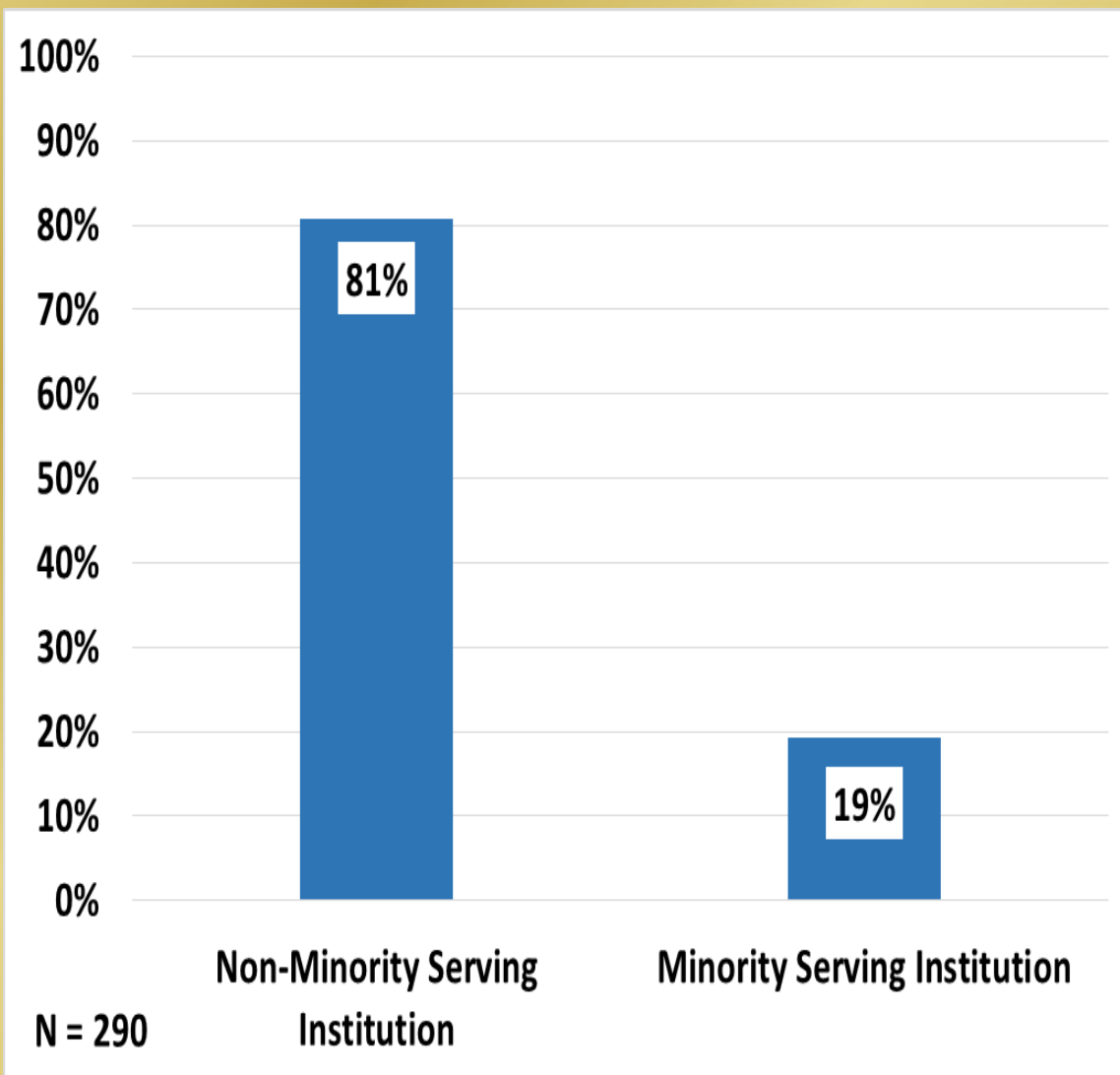


FINDINGS: TWO WORLDS AND THE COLOR LINE

Of the **290 full-time academics that participated in activities** that we label as participating in homogeneous (or minority-oriented) groups, we find:

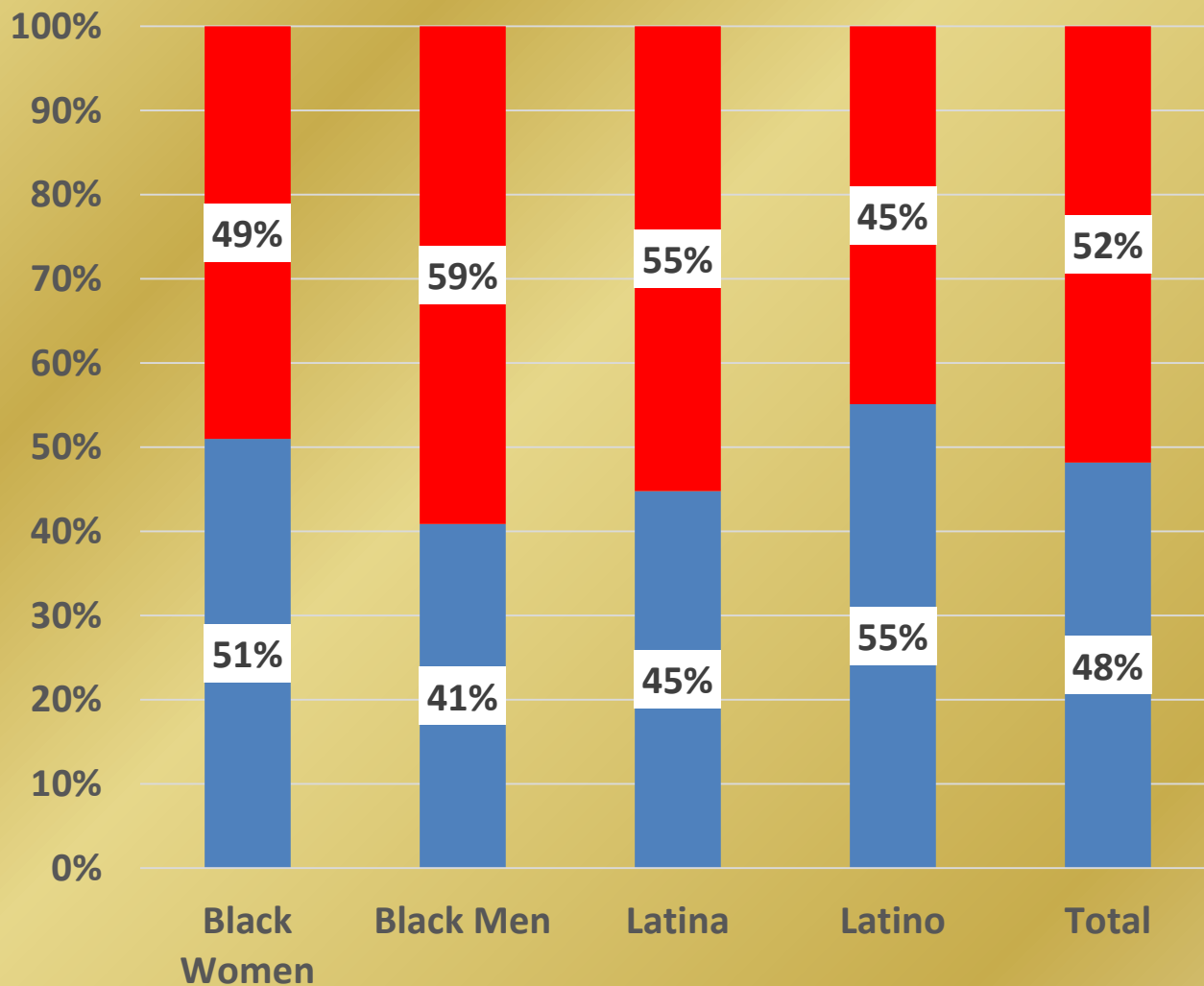
- The largest group of URM academics have published in a race or ethnic oriented journal (**just over 5 out of 10 have done this**);
- Followed by **nearly 5 out of 10 who joined an ASA Section** that has to do with under-represented minorities (Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities; Section on Latina/Latino Sociology; and Section on Race, Class, and Gender);
- **2 out of 10** are employed in an HSI or HBCU institution;
- **15%** teach in or direct a department emphasizing race and/or ethnicity;
- **7%** were awardees in ASA's Minority Fellowship Program (MFP)

Percentage of Academics Employed at Historically Black or Hispanic Serving Institutions



Percentages of Academics Published in a Race/Ethnicity Journal

Black Men are the Most Likely



N=290

■ No ■ Yes

MORE ON TWO WORLDS

The table below suggests that about **7 out of 10 of the 290 full-time academics** in this study participate in a minority-oriented world as well as a white-dominated world, with the largest group participating in one such activity.

Number of Activities	Percent of Participants
0	30
1	38
2	22
3	7
4	2
5	0
Total	100.0

TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS THUS FAR

These preliminary findings show **some beginning** understandings of the world of URM scholars in sociology.

We find that **intersectionality** is important.

We find that those who become full-time faculty members **appear to be doing relatively well in terms of their career trajectories, although black women seem to be at the bottom of the hierarchy.**

We hypothesize that participation in activities designed for people of color may help climb career ladders, because there is **support in the homophilous worlds** that is not there in a heterogeneous one, but needs further testing.

But, **we need to know more** in order to understand more fully what helps these scholars to the top of the discipline and profession and what constrains them.

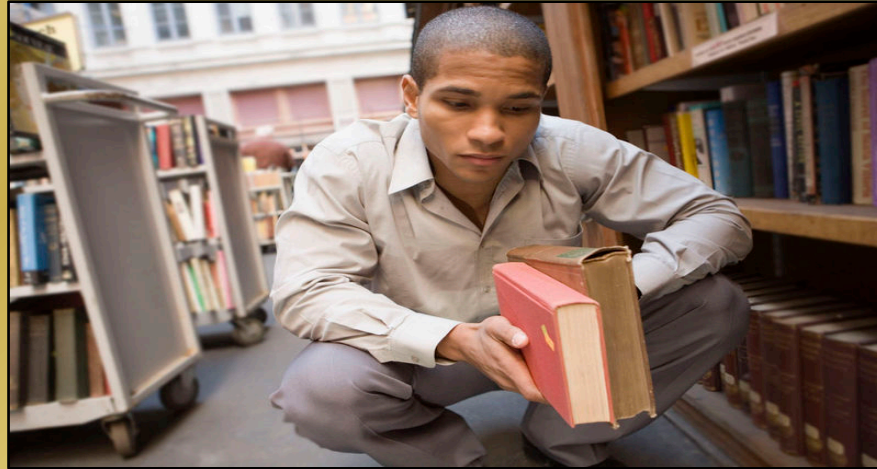
NEXT STEPS IN THE PROJECT

- Continue to collect and verify **unobtrusive data**, including number and types of publications.
- Further multi-variate **data analysis** and reporting.
- Compare findings with the **parallel database** for the discipline of economics (presentation forthcoming at American Economic Association meeting in Jan. 2017).
- Go beyond the percentages and conduct a **survey of URM scholars about their experiences**, especially **inclusion and exclusion** within their departments and disciplines.

Questions?

- How do these findings fit with **your experiences**?
- What **additional concepts** would you add or redefine?
- What do you expect in terms of issues such as **marginality** and **inclusion or exclusion**?
- What questions would you like to see on the **upcoming survey questionnaire**?

THANK YOU!



For further discussion or help, please contact:

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