

# **Evsyukova et al. (2023) “LinkedOut?”**

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- First stage: send connection requests to the people that LinkedIn recommend. Measure acceptance rates.
- Second stage: re-randomize the profile images (skin-tone) associated with newly created networks. Measure response to job advice request from the connections.
- The authors conclude: white skin-tone causes 13% higher connection acceptance rate; larger network (similar response rate) transmutes into more answers to job questions.

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- **If recipients connected on LinkedIn based on who they thought was a real-world connection, what would we expect the racial gap in connection rates to be?**
- To answer this: we need to know how profile cues help rule in/out IRL professional connection?

## Predicted Racial Gap if Connections premised on IRL network

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- Median share black undergrads at the colleges of the recipient is 6% black, 62% white
- If 500 IRL connections → 30:310 B/W. If 1% chance of crudely fitting profile per capita → 70 pp gap in the likelihood the black profile crudely fit the description of IRL v. white connection.

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  - Perhaps recipients ask not “am I professionally connected” but “would I like to be”?
- Implication: experimental connection requests are closing the racial gap in the recipients’ pre-existing virtual networks at a rapid clip.
- Extrapolating: if the authors kept running this experiment, the ratio of virtual to (approximated) IRL black professional connections would converge to  $\sim 9X$  larger than among white connections.

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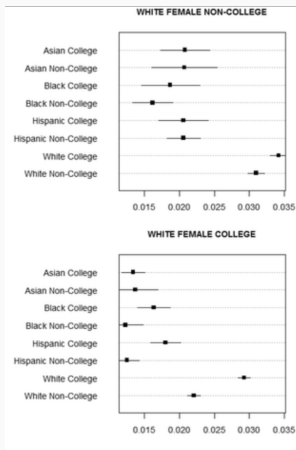
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- $\sim 2X$  higher contact rate for equivalent white vs. black profile (Hitsch, Hortaçsu, Ariely, 2010)
- Lin and Lundquist (2013) “Mate Selection in Cyberspace”: racial contact gap swamps college education gap.



→ **LinkedIn may be uniquely positioned to shape racial composition of virtual network.**

## More to do to generalize to racial category

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Otis Charles

Office Manager at Onin  
Staffing, LLC

Recent B.A. in Business



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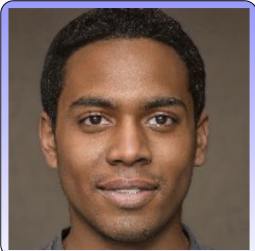
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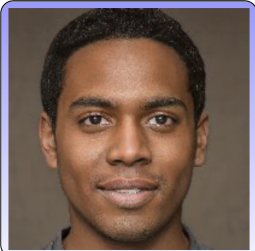
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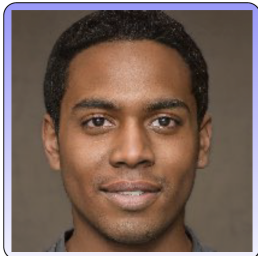
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- Non-separable assessment of accomplishments and demographics (Bohren et al. 2019)
  - Eg. *successful* women face favorable discrimination.

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- How does granting virtual connections affect access to job advice?
  - Hard to answer: exogenous variation in network connections rare.
  - Maps closely to platform policy levers: connection recommendation algorithms!
- Important and convincing result: higher volume of connections confers economically meaningful advantages in the form of job seeking advice.
  - 21% answer: 3% referral, 5% offer to meet, 15% stay in touch.