


# Where Are All the Boys?

## Examining the Black-White Gender Gap in Postsecondary Attainment



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# Presentation Outline

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- Background
- Research Questions
- Theoretical Framework
- Research Significance
- Data & Methods
- Results
- Conclusions
- Implications for Future Research

# Background

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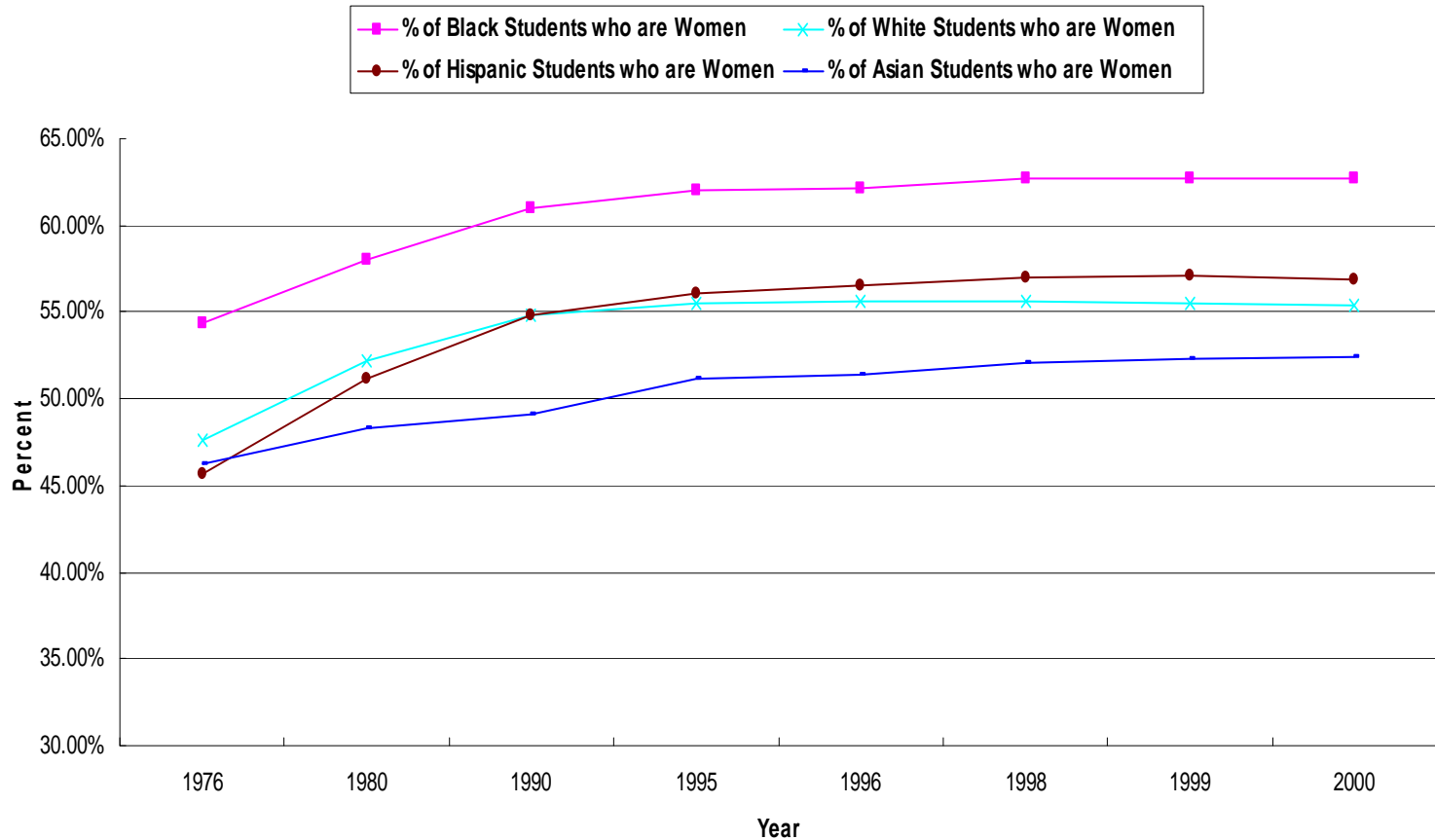
- ❑ Women's under-representation given academic performance (Alexander & Eckland 1974; Mickelson 1989).
- ❑ Women's over-representation at colleges (Buchmann & DiPrete 2006; Schofer & Meyer 2005).
- ❑ Blacks' lower enrollment, longer transitions to college, and longer completions (Nettles & Perna 1997; Kao & Thompson 2003; Perna & Titus 2005).

# Research Questions

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- ❑ How does black students' postsecondary attainment vary by gender?
- ❑ How does the black gender gap in degree attainment differ from the white gender gap?
- ❑ How do early school experiences and teachers' expectations affect black and white students' postsecondary attainment?

**Figure 1**  
**Undergraduate Enrollment**



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

# The Gender Gap in Attainment

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	1976-1977	1999-2000
Black Females	57.0%	66.0%
White Females	46.0%	57.0%
Hispanic Females	45.0%	60.0%
Asian Females	45.0%	54.0%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

# Theoretical Framework

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- ❑ Blocked opportunities (Hanson 1994; Kao & Tienda 1998; Mickelson 1990).
- ❑ Schools reinforce inequality (Bowles & Gintis 1976; MacLeod 1995; Willis 1981).
- ❑ Teachers' Influence (Crosnoe et al. 2004; Ehrenberg 1995; Ferguson 2001, Lopez 2003).
- ❑ Students' Expectations (Mickelson 1990).

# Significance of Research

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- Focus on Gender and Race
- Minority and Female Enrollment
- Rare Reversal/New Inequality
- Consequences of the Gender Gap



# Data

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- ❑ National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88).
- ❑ Nationally representative sample of 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- ❑ In this paper, we analyze data on black and white students who entered the sample in the base year (1988) and stayed through the 4th follow up (2000).

# Data & Methods

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- ❑ 974 black students: 416 males and 558 females.
- ❑ 7,632 white students: 3,613 males and 4,019 females.
- ❑ Contextual data: parents in 1988 and teachers in 1990.
- ❑ Binary Logistic Regression
  - DV: Associate's Degree or more in 2000
  - Bachelor's Degree or more in 2000

**Table 2. Means and Frequencies for Variables of Interest (N=8606)**

	Blacks		Whites	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
<i>Postsecondary Attainment:</i>				
Associate's or more in 2000	25.18%**	34.73%	43.06%***	48.26%
Bachelor's or more in 2000	19.37%**	27.79%	36.14%***	40.18%
<i>Previous Achievement:</i>				
Grade 6–8 composite	2.79***	3.00	3.04***	3.18
Grade 10 composite	2.75**	2.90	2.97***	3.08
Grade 12 composite	1.61***	1.90	2.19***	2.41
<i>Teachers' Expectations:</i>				
Student will probably attend college	48.23%**	60.36%	67.21%***	71.31%
<i>Students' Behavior:</i>				
8th grade fought with another student	32.82%***	17.80%	29.83%***	7.50%
8th grade sent to office for misbehaving	48.85%***	30.04%	37.55%***	15.15%

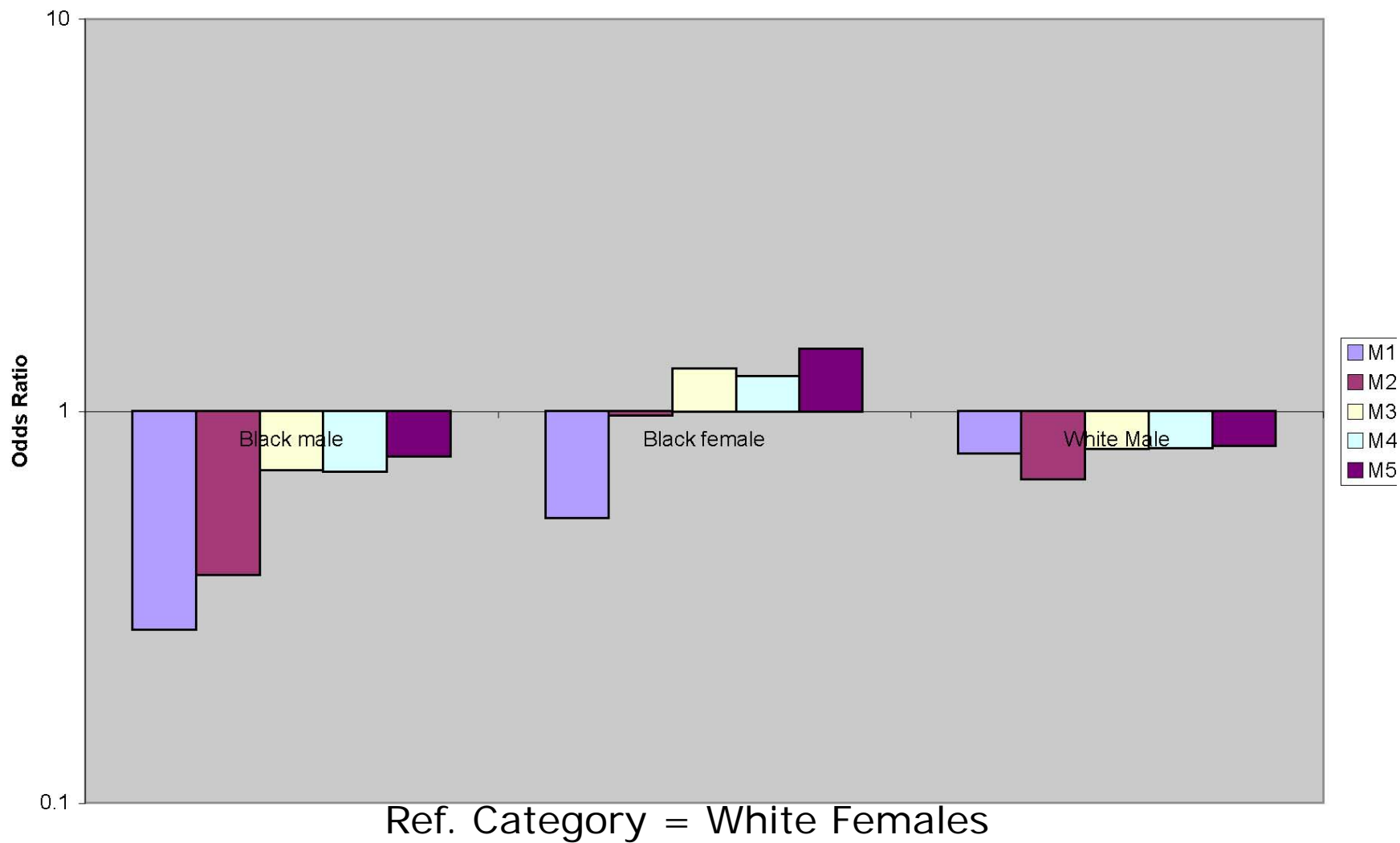
**Table 3.** Associate's Degree Attainment Reported as Odds Ratios (N = 8606)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Demographic Characteristics:</i>					
Black male	0.36***	0.57***	0.89	0.87	0.94
Black female	0.69***	1.45***	1.60***	1.53***	1.77***
White female	1.28***	1.49***	1.25***	1.24***	1.22**
<i>Family Background:</i>					
Socioeconomic status in 1988		3.94***	2.59***	2.37***	2.27***
Mother-and-father raised respondent					1.73***
Respondent's family size					0.89***
Respondent's parents are married					0.97
<i>Previous Academic Achievement:</i>					
Grade 6–8 composite			1.67***	1.57***	1.54***
Grade 10 composite			1.26***	1.18**	1.17**
Grade 12 composite			2.11***	1.94***	1.94***
<i>High School Status:</i>					
High school sequence			3.23***	3.11***	3.08***
Ever dropped out of high school			0.48***	0.49***	0.55**
<i>Students' Expectations:</i>					
8th grade expect to graduate from college			1.16**	1.14*	1.13*
10th grade expect to graduate from college			1.42***	1.35***	1.35***
12th grade expect to graduate from college			1.23***	1.19**	1.19**
8th grade expect missing					
10th grade expect missing			1.70	1.83	1.70
12th grade expect missing			0.77	0.87	0.79
			0.61***	0.62***	0.61***
<i>Teachers' Expectations:</i>					
Student will probably attend college				2.54***	2.52***

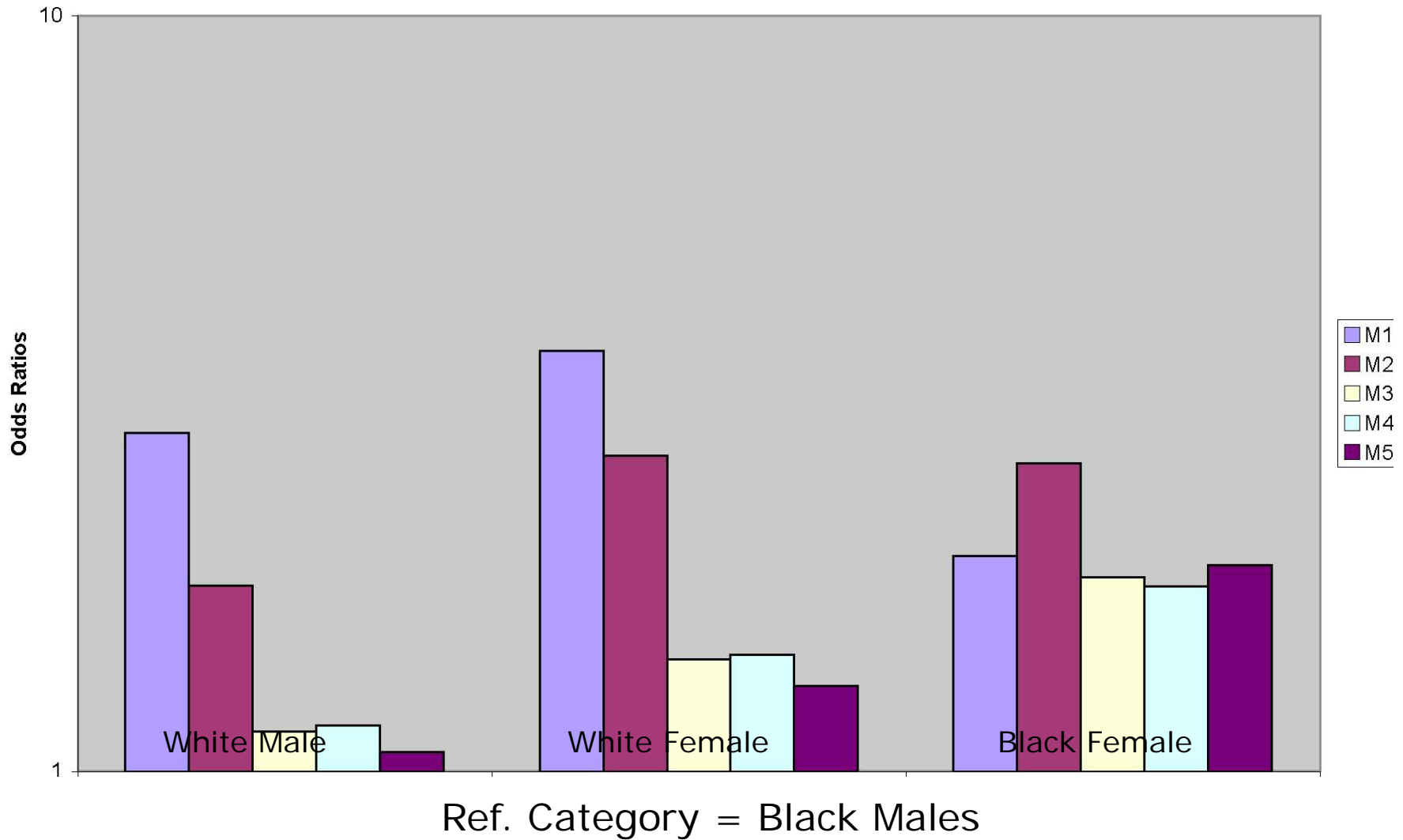
**Table 4.** Bachelor's Degree Attainment Reported as Odds Ratios (N = 8606)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Demographic Characteristics:</i>					
Black male	0.36***	0.61***	1.20	1.21	1.34
Black female	0.66***	1.55***	1.97***	1.90***	2.30***
White female	1.26***	1.51***	1.21**	1.21**	1.19*
<i>Family Background:</i>					
Socioeconomic status in 1988		5.05***	3.64***	3.32***	3.19***
Mother-and-father-raised respondent					2.16***
Respondent's family size					0.88***
Respondent's parents are married					0.86
<i>Previous Academic Achievement:</i>					
Grade 6–8 composite			1.95***	1.83***	1.80***
Grade 10 composite			1.40***	1.30***	1.29***
Grade 12 composite			2.46***	2.25***	2.25***
<i>High School Status:</i>					
High school sequence			4.61***	4.42***	4.44***
Ever dropped out of high school			0.22***	0.23***	0.28***
<i>Students' Expectations:</i>					
8th grade expect to graduate from college			1.23**	1.22**	1.20**
10th grade expect to graduate from college			1.41***	1.34***	1.34***
12th grade expect to graduate from college			1.36***	1.31***	1.31***
8th grade expect missing					
10th grade expect missing			1.02	1.13	0.93
12th grade expect missing			0.87	1.01	0.90
			0.61***	0.62**	0.60***
<i>Teachers' Expectations:</i>					
Student will probably attend college				2.97***	2.94***

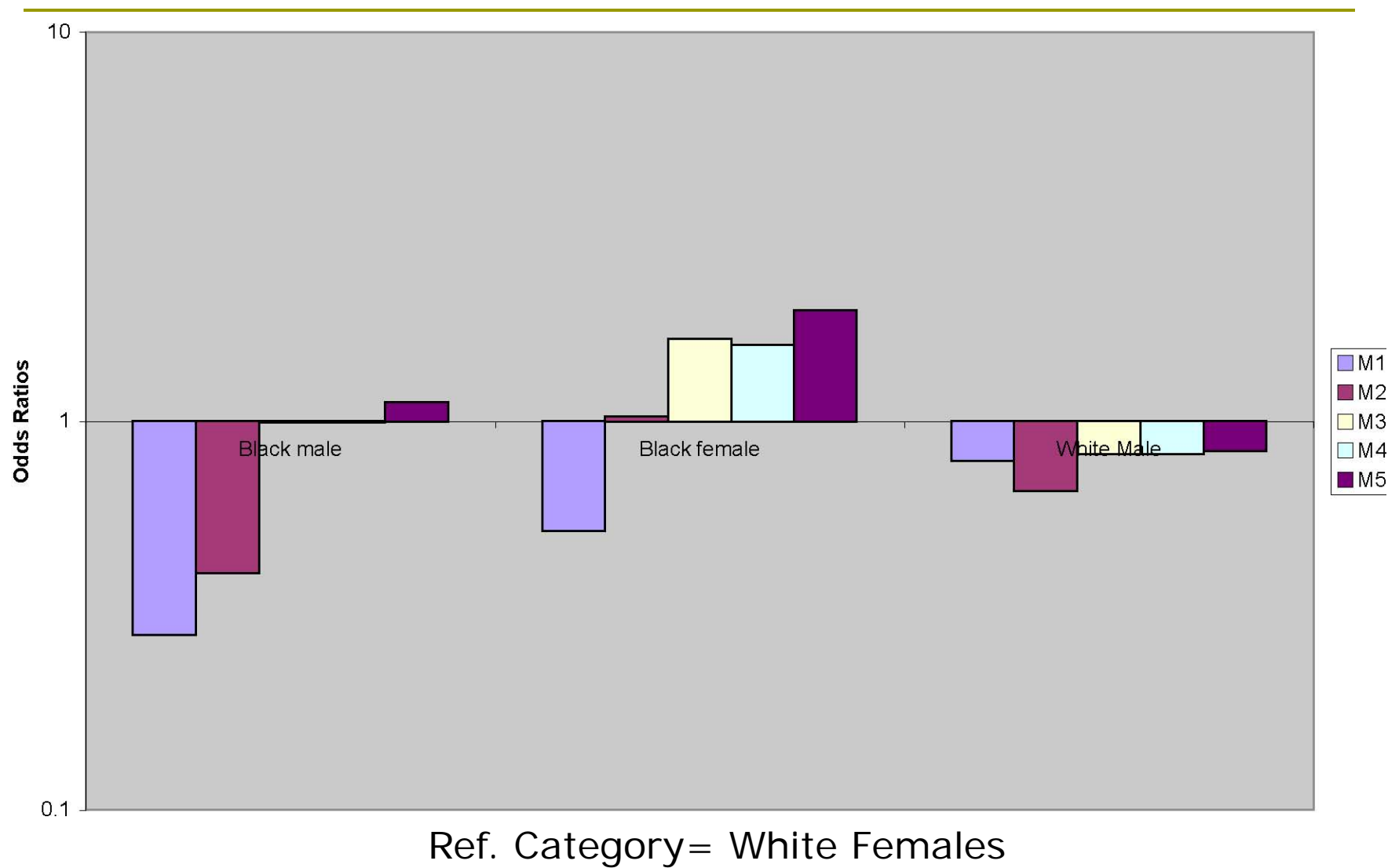
**Fig. 1.** Associate's Degree Attainment



**Fig. 2.** Associate's Degree Attainment

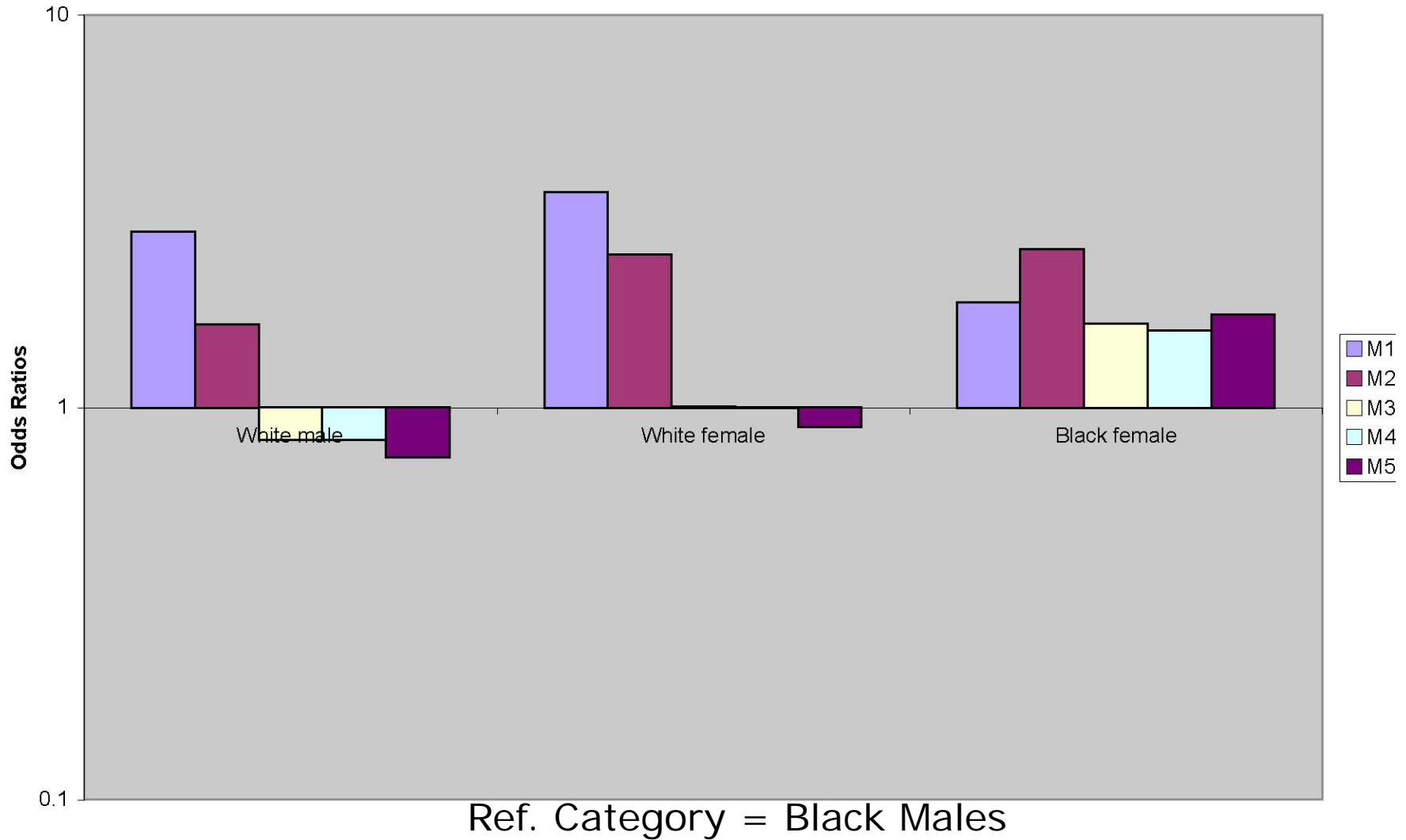


**Fig. 3.** Bachelor's Degree Attainment





**Fig. 4. Bachelor's Degree Attainment**



# Conclusions

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- ❑ Females are more likely than same-race males to earn a college degree.
- ❑ After controlling for SES, black females more likely than white males.
- ❑ After controlling for SES, black females and white females have comparable odds.
- ❑ Among black males and females of the same SES, black females 2.5 times the odds.

# Conclusions

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- ❑ Early school experiences are particularly important in explaining the lower attainment rates among Black men.
- ❑ Teachers' expectations have a strong effect even after controlling for students' own expectations and previous achievement.
- ❑ Socioeconomic status continues to be a strong predictor even in the final model.
- ❑ Females remain more likely than same race males to earn degrees.

# Future Research

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- ❑ Intersection of race and gender in elementary school
- ❑ Intersection of race and gender in college
- ❑ Closer examination of class
- ❑ Examine the gender gap among Asian and Hispanic students