

## **Ethnic Variations in Characteristics of First Unions among Asian American Young Adults**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the characteristics of first cohabitations and first marriages formed by Asian American young adults, focusing specifically on ethnic variations between East Asian, Filipino, and South Asian Americans. The fourth wave of Add Health data, which collects complete union histories of all respondents between the ages of 25 to 32 in years 2007-2008, offers a unique opportunity to study first unions formed by recent young immigrants. The findings show that the level of cohabitation is very similar across all Asian subgroups when socio-demographic covariates are considered. East Asians and Filipinos delay marriage longer than do South Asians. Filipinos are more likely to turn a first cohabitation into a marriage and to have a first marriage preceded by cohabitation than are the other two groups. Finally, East Asians are significantly more likely to have a

white cohabiting or married partner. Compared with their East Asian peers, Filipinos are more likely to cohabit with Asian coethnics or with individuals from other minority groups than with whites. The analyses presented here reveal that ethnic variations should not be overlooked when studying cohabitation and marriage among Asian Americans.

**Key Words:** Asian American, race/ethnicity, marriage, intermarriage, cohabitation