# Diversity in Relationship Science Assignment

I was especially appalled by the findings reported in figure 3. While age, education, race, and sexual orientation were reported in the majority of studies, income and inter-racial couples were both reported at only rates of 24% and 8%, respectively. Why may this be the case? As a potential response, this may be because these two metrics are not considered “typical” demographic information compared to the others. Therefore, in contrast to the others being measured out of habit or presumed usefulness, these metrics are not measured unless they are immediately required in the research.

The apparent omission of these data points is baffling. The author notes, “dyadic nature of intimate relationships means that… gender makeup… or the pairing of individuals into inter-racial relationships become relevant dimensions to examine.” As I read this, I realized it may be even more crucial to measure the disparities within couples instead of between couples—in other words, making intra-couple rather than inter-couple comparisons. Inter-racial relationships seem to be a common measurement, but what about disparities between couple members in socioeconomic status, levels of education, and more?

Otherwise, I found the article enlightening on the lack of diversity and representation in longitudinal studies and much of relationship research. I found it particularly impressive that research assistants (RAs) manually coded and coded data from each of the 771 studies.

## Research Area

Underrepresented Group: **People with lower levels of education**

Research Area: **Interdependence, Socioeconomic Status**

Broad Question: **Does the similarity or difference of education levels between partners influence their relationship dynamic or satisfaction?**

Specific Question: **Does the difference between education level of couples relate to the level of self-protection partners experience?**

Question Type: **Population Specific**

## Implications

Research in how education level disparities relate to self-protection is important because it sheds insight on the current evolving relationship landscape and how current trends may lead to a reimagined dynamic (and perhaps intervention) in modern relationships.

The educational disparities are increasing. From [the increasing gender gap in college enrollment and graduation rates](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2021/10/08/the-male-college-crisis-is-not-just-in-enrollment-but-completion/) to the fact that [70% of high school valedictorians are female](https://nypost.com/2019/01/19/why-its-much-easier-for-men-to-get-into-the-ivy-league-than-women/), women are, on average, much more likely to enroll and complete higher education compared to men who are “less likely to graduate high school in the first place, and less likely to complete college after enrolling” ([Reeves](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2021/10/08/the-male-college-crisis-is-not-just-in-enrollment-but-completion/)).

For romantic partners, particularly heterosexual couples, the above statistics means an asymmetry in educational achievement is much more likely. Observing how this disparity affects self-protection is important because increased self-protection has negative ramifications to relationship satisfaction and well-being, as we have discussed in class about studies of low-SES couples. Therefore, if educational disparity leads to higher self-protection, it may forecast a decrease in overall relationship well-being in the future. Through research in this area, we can better understand the source of this self-protection (for example, improper conceptions of masculinity), if such a disparity leads to lower relationship satisfaction, and if so, brainstorm and deploy appropriate countermeasures for the future to address this issue.