Unpacking "Black": Ending Erasure and Homogenization of Black College Student Experiences

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Defining "Race"

- Socially constructed, symbolic boundaries categorizing a group of people who share physical and cultural traits and common ancestry
  - Complex and fluid based on political, economic, or other social interests at a given time
- Race has real consequences—shapes access to goods and resources
- Race is multidimensional—racial identity vs. racial categorization
- We examine how the homogenization of Blackness in higher education statistics and measurement may conceal important variation among Black racial/ethnic subgroups

Immigrants Are a Growing Share Among Black Americans ...

% of U.S. black population that is foreign born

1980	1990	2000	2013
3.1	4.9	6.7	8.7
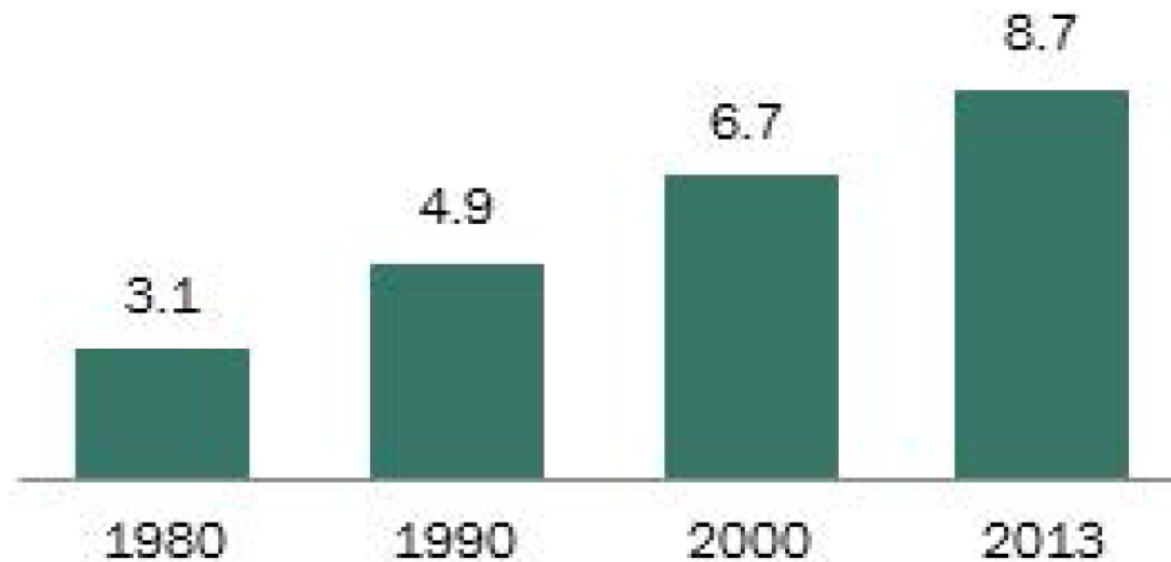
SOURCE: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS) and the 1980, 1990, and 2000 censuses (5% IPUMS)

Among the U.S. Black population, both multiracial and Hispanic numbers have grown since 2000

U.S. Black population

U.S. Black population 36,200,000
- 1,000,000
- 1,500,000
- 33,700,000

U.S. Black population 42,000,000
- 1,700,000
- 2,400,000
- 37,900,000

U.S. Black population 46,800,000

Black Hispanic 2,400,000

Multiracial (Non-Hispanic) 3,700,000

Single race (Non-Hispanic) 40,700,000

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BLACK ENTERPRISE · EST · 1970 · 50

NEWS

VIRGINIA PASSES LAW REQUIRING UNIVERSITIES TO CREATE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES

by Jeroslyn Johnson · April 3, 2021 · 5080

ATLANTA BLACK STAR

NATIONAL   NEWS   RACE

Cornell University Black Student Group Complains of Too Many African, Caribbean Students

By Tanasia Kenney | October 2, 2017   Comments (0)

THINK
Opinion, Analysis, Essays

Kamala Harris is Asian and Black. That shouldn't be confusing in 2020 – but it is to some.

Questions about what constitutes Blackness aren't new. Black people's ability to answer those questions for themselves is.

Aug. 12, 2020, 11:55 AM PDT
By Nadra Nittle, cultural critic

Institutional Racial Categorization

- American Sociological Association—measuring and collecting data on race is vital for equity

- Practical and symbolic meanings
  - Institutional goals for equity, diversity, and inclusion
  - Allocation of power and scarce resources

- US Government mandates how data on race is collected in higher education
  - Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
  - Required reporting categories change over time

IPEDS Race/Ethnicity Questions

Are you Hispanic or Latino?

○ Yes

○ No

Regardless of your answer to the prior question, please indicate how you identify yourself. (Select one or more)

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Black or African American

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

☐ White

- "Hispanic or Latino" = Always "Hispanic" even if multiracial
- Non-Hispanic Multiracial people are reported as "two or more races"
- "Black" always excludes multiracial and Hispanic/Latino

UC Race/Ethnicity Question

African American / Black	Hispanic / Latino(a)	American Indian / Alaskan Native	Asian	White
African American / Black • African American • African* • Black Caribbean * • Other African American / Black*	**Hispanic / Latino** • Mexican / Mexican American / Chicano • Cuban /Cuban American* • Latin American / Latino* • Puerto Rican* • Other Hispanic, Latin American or of Spanish Origin	**American Indian / Alaskan Native** • American Indian / Alaskan Native	**Asian / Asian American** • Asian Indian*# • Bangladeshi* • Cambodian* • Chinese /Chinese American (except Taiwanese) • Filipino / Filipino American • Hmong* • Indonesian* • Japanese / Japanese American • Korean / Korean American • Laotian* • Malaysian* • Other Asian (not including Middle Eastern) • Pakistani*# • Sri Lankan* • Taiwanese / Taiwanese American* • Thai* • Vietnamese / Vietnamese American **Pacific Islander** • Fijian* • Guamanian / Chamorro* • Hawaiian* • Samoan* • Tongan* • Other Pacific Islander*	**Southwest Asian and North African^** • Afghan • Algerian • Armenian • Assyrian / Chaldean • Azerbaijani • Bahraini • Berber • Circassian • Djiboutian • Egyptian • Emirati • Georgian • Iranian • Iraqi • Israeli • Jordanian • Kurdish • Kuwaiti • Lebanese • Libyan • Mauritanian • Moroccan • Omani • Palestinian • Qatari • Saudi Arabian • Somali • Sudanese • Syrian • Tunisian • Turkish • Yemeni • Other North African • Other Southwest Asian
				White / Caucasian • European / European descent • Other White /Caucasian* • White / Middle Eastern+ • White/ North African+

Which of the following groups best describes your background? Check as many as apply

Theorizing Black Heterogeneity in Higher Education

- Blackness is expansive and diverse—not adequately captured by homogeneous measures
  - Sociologist Tressie Mcmillan Cottom (2018)—"Basic Black" vs. "Special Black"

- <u>Black Immigration</u>
  - Black ethnic variation is often ignored when it is centered for other groups
  - Other racial groups are granted more ethnic complexity
  - Immigrant-origin Black college students have better college outcomes than US-born Black college students, on average (Mwangi, 2014; Massey et al, 2007)

- <u>Black Multiraciality</u>
  - Legacy of one drop rule
  - Post-2000 census
  - Marginalization vs. privilege
  - Multiracial Black college students have different social and academic experiences in college (Smith and Moore, 2000),

Research Questions

1. Does the use of IPEDS race measures conceal heterogeneity in the backgrounds of Black college students and/or systematically erase particular groups?

2. Is there significant variation between theoretically derived subgroups of Black students in early college outcomes (first term GPA and STEM major choice)?

Data and Methods

- Full population of entering first year students at three University of California campuses in Fall, 2016 and Fall, 2017
  - Admissions, Financial Aid, and Registrar data
  - Deidentified data
  - Exclude international students
  - N=22,246 in total sample; 1,154 in Black only sample
- Methods:
  - T-tests; Logistic and OLS Regressions—Both full sample and Black only (focus for today)
  - Examined intersectional variation by gender and class, but these were not significant

Multiple Measures of "Black"

- IPEDS Measure:
  - Black/African American—excludes multiracial and Hispanic or Latinx Black students
- Theoretically Derived Black Racial/Ethnic Subgroups
  - <u>US Black</u>
    - selected <u>only</u> "African American/Black" and no other race or Black subcategory
  - <u>Multiracial/Diasporic Black</u>
    - Diasporic Black—Caribbean, African, or Other Black
    - Marginalized Multiracial Black (Black + Latinx; Black + Indiginous)
    - Privilege Adjacent Multiracial Black (Black+ White; Black + Asian)

Other Measures

- Dependent Variables
  - **STEM Major in first term**: Declared STEM major (science, math, or engineering), compared to humanities, social science, arts or undeclared
  - **First term college GPA**: from college transcript
- Control Variables
  - **Social class**: First generation college student; Pell-grant eligible
  - **STEM major**: Included as in models predicting college GPA
  - **High school GPA**: From high school transcript
  - **Gender identity:** Cis-female or gender queer compared to cis-male
  - **Cohort:** 2016 or 2017 entering first year cohort

Table 1: Comparison of IPEDS Black Sample and Our Sample

	IPEDS	OUR SAMPLE
Variables	Black	<u>All</u> Black Students
First Term College GPA	2.755 (0.839)	2.734 (0.870)
STEM Major	0.428 (0.495)	0.430 (0.495)
PELL Eligible	0.550 (0.498)	0.522 (0.500)
First Generation College Student	0.475 (0.500)	0.497 (0.500)
High School GPA	3.688 (0.346)	3.712 (0.343)
Gender		
Cis Male	0.377 (0.485)	0.373 (0.484)
Cis Female	0.616 (0.487)	0.617 (0.484)
Gender Queer	0.007 (0.085)	0.010 (0.101)
N	690	1,154

40% of Black students are erased as "Black" using the IPEDS measures

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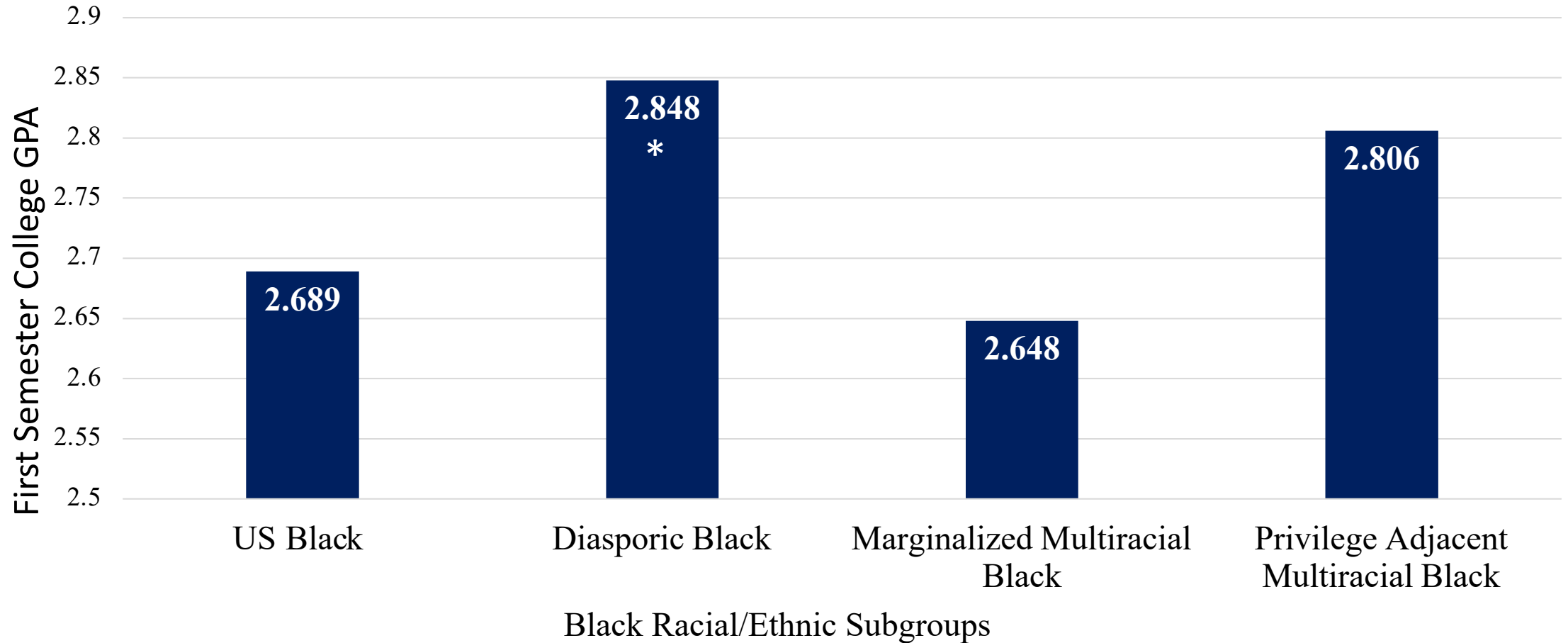# Table 1: Comparison of Black Racial/Ethnic Subgroup Means

Variables	US Black Students	Diasporic Black Students	Marginalized Multiracial Black Students	Privilege Adjacent Multiracial Black Students
First Term College GPA	2.680 (0.857)	2.851** (0.826)	2.634 (0.898)	2.792 (0.911)
STEM Major	0.375 (0.485)	0.512*** (0.501)	0.425 (0.495)	0.440 (0.498)
PELL Eligible	0.570 (0.496)	0.484* (0.501)	0.550 (0.499)	0.442** (0.498)
First Generation College Student	0.516 (0.500)	0.386*** (0.488)	0.593 (0.492)	0.510 (0.501)
High School GPA	3.663 (0.359)	3.750*** (0.321)	3.707 (0.343)	3.767*** (0.323)
Gender				
Cis Male	0.402 (0.491)	0.354 (0.479)	0.402 (0.491)	0.304** (0.461)
Cis Female	0.589 (0.493)	0.632 (0.483)	0.589 (0.493)	0.686** (0.465)
Gender Queer	0.009 (0.095)	0.014 (0.118)	0.009 (0.095)	0.010 (0.098)
N	443	285	219	207

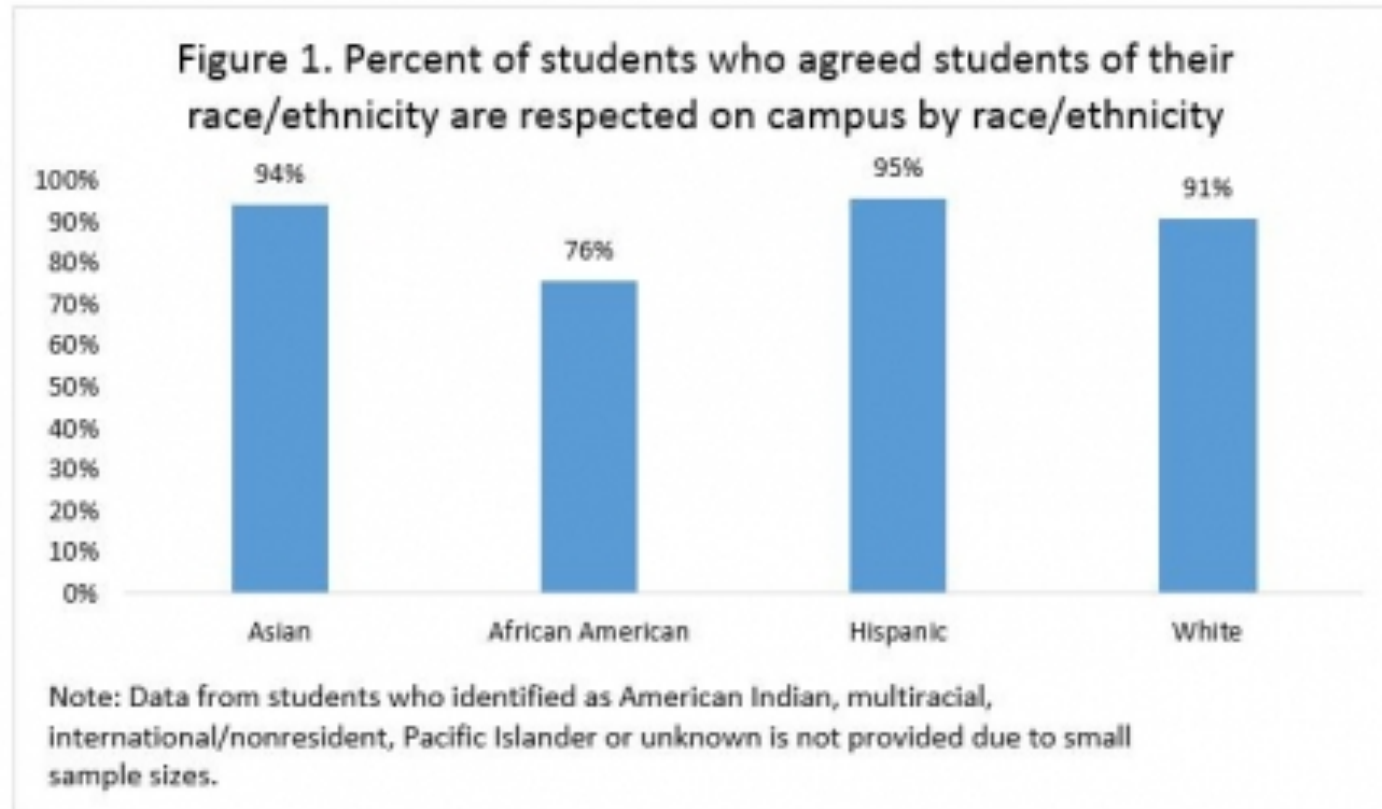T-test= significantly different from US Black

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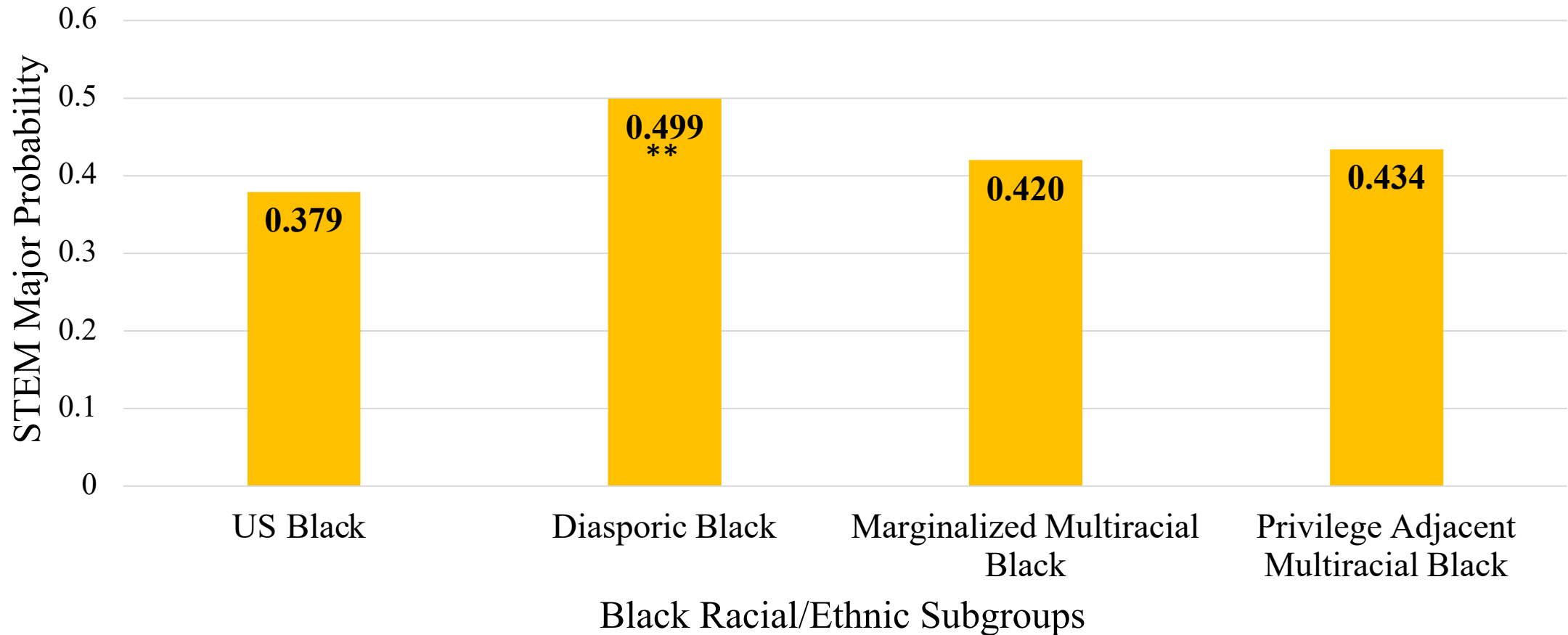
Summary of Findings

- Current IPEDS race and ethnicity measures significantly undercount Black students and mask important variation among Black students
  - Some subgroups arrive at college with relatively greater privilege
- Diasporic Black and Privilege Adjacent Multiracial Black students have higher GPAs than US Black students and Marginalized Multiracial Black students
- Diasporic Black students are more likely than US Black students (and White students) to major in STEM fields

Theoretical Implications

- Institutional choices about Black racial categorization are not neutral
  - Importance of studying and theorizing Black racial categorization in addition to Black racial identities in higher education
- Multiple meaningful Black racial/ethnic subgroups (not just two)
- Studies of Black multiraciality must consider the relative structural advantages of some groups (white, Asian) compared to others (Indigenous and Latinx)
  - Contextual
- Intersectional variation by gender, class, sexuality, etc. might be visible in a larger sample or in relation to different outcomes

Practical Implications

Figure 1. Percent of students who agreed students of their race/ethnicity are respected on campus by race/ethnicity

Note: Data from students who identified as American Indian, multiracial, international/nonresident, Pacific Islander or unknown is not provided due to small sample sizes.

SOURCE: http://panorama.ucmerced.edu/news/student-perceptions-campus-climate-revealed (2016)

Practical Implications