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ABSTRACT

Using pooled data from the 1995 and 2002 NSFGs, we compare three aspects of women's first unions – the timing and type of first union, fertility in cohabitation and marriage, and the duration and outcome of first cohabitation – for U.S.-born Whites, Blacks, Mexican Americans, and foreign-born Mexicans. Differences in cohabiting behaviors are most pronounced between foreign-born Mexicans and women born in the United States. Although foreign-born Mexicans favor marriage, the foreign-born Mexican women who do cohabit treat cohabitation as a substitute for legal marriage, bearing children in these unions and remaining with their partner without marrying him. Cohabitation is more likely to be a short-lived union that is a precursor to marriage for Whites. For Blacks cohabitation is also short-term, but as a transition between periods of singlehood, and less often as a step toward marriage. Cohabitation patterns of U.S.-born Mexican Americans are between those of foreign-born Mexican Americans and White women born in the United States, suggesting that family norms from sending communities erode with prolonged exposure to U.S. family life.

INTRODUCTION

U.S. marriage patterns have undergone substantial change over the past several decades. Median age at first marriage has increased dramatically from 21.1 in 1975 to 26.1 in 2010 for women and for men from 23.5 to 28.2 over the same period (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2010, Table MS-2). At the same time, the percentage of nonmarital births rose from 14.3 to 40.6 (Ventura and Bachrach 2000, Table 1; Hamilton, Martin, and Ventura 2010: Table 7). Over half of marriages are likely to end in separation or divorce (Raley and Bumpass 2003), and children have become increasingly likely to live with cohabiting parents (Bumpass and Lu 2000; Kennedy and Bumpass 2008). Taken together, these trends indicate a separation of the processes of formal marriage, childbearing, and childrearing. They are the demographic representation of the changing social institutions of marriage and parenthood.

The transformations of marriage and parenthood are critically linked to the greater acceptance of nonmarital cohabitation. Since 1970, rates of nonmarital cohabitation have risen to become the behavioral norm (Smock 2000). Attitude data also suggest a greater cultural acceptance of cohabitation (Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001). About 70 percent of first unions are now cohabitations and over half of nonmarital births in recent decades occurred in cohabiting unions (Kennedy and Bumpass 2008).

Previous studies have tried to ascertain whether cohabitation is a stage in the courtship process that will eventually end in a marriage or an alternate type of union that substitutes for marriage (Casper and Bianchi 2002; Heuveline and Timberlake 2004; Manning 1995; Raley 2001). To adjudicate between these two interpretations of the cohabitation trends, researchers use information about whether cohabiters eventually marry their partners, whether a pregnant woman marries her cohabiting partner before their child is born, and whether cohabiters dissolve their

union. This demographic approach emphasizes central tendencies and aggregate patterns over variation in the population in the demographic structure of cohabitation and in individuals' own attitudes about their relationships (Heuveline and Timberlake 2004; Seltzer 2004). Yet, the variation ignored in this approach can provide insight on the meaning of cohabitation.

An important dimension of variation in the United States is its racial and ethnic diversity and the inclusion of immigrants who bring with them preferences and cultural practices formed in their countries of origin. Race, ethnic, and nativity groups also differ in their access to economic resources that affect marriage, cohabitation, and childbearing. This paper investigates variation in cohabitation among women in four race, ethnic and nativity groups – U.S.-born Whites, Blacks, and Mexican Americans, and foreign-born Mexicans[1] – to shed light on how economic and cultural factors are likely to affect the meaning of cohabitation. We follow the convention in family demography in which data on prevalence, rates, and conditions of cohabitation are used to infer the significance of cohabitation in a kinship system (e.g., Heuveline and Timberlake 2004). Our approach complements that in qualitative studies of women's subjective understandings of the meaning and importance of their relationships (Edin et al. 2004; Manning and Smock 2005; Sassler 2004). We combine data from the 1995 and 2002 National Surveys of Family Growth (NSFG) to provide samples large enough to compare experiences of U.S. natives and immigrant Mexican Americans. Using life table and event history methods, we examine three aspects of women's first unions: the timing and type of first union, fertility in cohabitation and marriage, and the duration and outcome of first cohabitation.

This paper extends past research in three ways. First, we add to the small number of studies that investigate cohabitation and marriage patterns of Mexican Americans (Brown et al.

[1] We refer to individuals born in Mexico but living in the United States as both Mexicans and Mexican Americans to reflect their potential dual identities. The data section describes our measure of ethnicity and nativity status.

2008; Landale et al. 2010; Phillips and Sweeney 2005; Raley et al. 2004) instead of the heterogeneous pan-ethnic category of all Hispanics. We focus on women of Mexican descent because of their importance in the U.S. population. According to the 2010 Census, about 50.5 million Hispanics live in the United States, and nearly two thirds of Hispanics or Latinos identify themselves as Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2011).[2]

A second contribution of our research is that we compare the cohabitation behavior of foreign-born and U.S.-born Mexican Americans. We investigate multiple, demographic aspects of cohabitating unions to address gaps in knowledge of immigrant families (Glick 2010). The comparison across several aspects of cohabitation provides insight on whether normative factors contribute to a distinctive pattern of cohabitation.

Our third contribution is to compare fertility in cohabiting unions to fertility in marriage. Studies of race-ethnic differences in fertility typically restrict attention to either cohabiting or married women. Yet, group differences in fertility in cohabiting unions reflect both differences in fertility preferences as well as differences in the willingness to bear a child in a cohabiting relationship. Whether cohabitation is an alternative to formal marriage as a childbearing institution should be gauged by the relative level and timing of fertility for cohabiting and married women. We contribute to debate about the meaning of cohabitation by comparing union type differences in fertility across the race, ethnic, and nativity groups.

The paper is organized as follows. The next section provides an overview of previous findings about race, ethnic, and nativity differences in cohabitation and our expectations about group variation in different aspects of cohabitation. This is followed by a description of our data and methods. We then present the results, and conclude with a discussion of their implications for understanding variation in the demographic meaning of cohabitation for U.S.-born Whites,

[2] This statistic is for individuals of any race.

Blacks, and Mexican Americans, and for foreign-born Mexican Americans.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Race, ethnic, and nativity differences in union formation

Our understanding of race-ethnic variations in patterns of union formation is largely informed by comparisons of Blacks and Whites, who differ significantly in their union formation (Brown et al. 2008; Raley and Sweeney 2009). Blacks are considerably less likely than Whites to form co-residential unions, but when they do, they are more likely than Whites to choose cohabitation over marriage as their first co-residential union (Bramlett and Mosher 2002; Manning and Smock 2000; Raley 1996). More recently, demographers have also examined union formation among Hispanics in light of the growth in the U.S. Hispanic population (Brown et al. 2008; Kennedy and Bumpass 2008; Landale et al. 2006). Overall, the cohabitation and marriage patterns of Hispanics fall between those of Whites and Blacks. Hispanics are more likely than Blacks to cohabit and about as likely as Whites to marry (Bramlett and Mosher 2002: Table C; Brown et al. 2008; Lloyd 2006).

The degree to which Hispanics' union formation patterns resemble those of Whites and Blacks, however, depends on national origin and nativity (Brown et al. 2008; Kennedy and Bumpass 2008; Landale et al. 2006; McNamee and Raley 2011). Whereas Mexican Americans are more likely to choose marriage than cohabitation as their first union, Puerto Ricans are more likely to choose cohabitation over marriage as a first union (Landale and Forste 1991; Raley et al. 2004). Union formation patterns also vary by nativity status. U.S.-born Hispanics are more likely than foreign-born Hispanics to have ever cohabited or to currently be in a cohabiting union (Brown et al. 2008; Kennedy and Bumpass 2008). In addition, U.S.-born Mexican Americans marry at older ages than do foreign-born Mexicans (Raley et al. 2004).

Because marriage is an economic institution, race, ethnic and nativity differences in the timing and types of unions formed arise, in part, from group differences in socioeconomic conditions. Individuals with uncertain economic prospects may cohabit rather than marry because cohabitation does not entail the same long-term economic responsibilities as marriage (Smock 2000; Oppenheimer et al. 1997). The disadvantaged labor market positions of Black men contribute to Black-White differences in marriage rates (Oppenheimer et al. 1997; Oppenheimer 2003). Aggregate differences in socioeconomic characteristics can also affect union formation by altering the quantity and quality of viable partners in local marriage markets. High unemployment and incarceration rates among Black men reduce the number of marriageable men and lower marriage rates of Black women (Edin et al. 2004; Raley 1996; Wilson and Neckerman 1987). Conversely, the surplus of single Mexican immigrant men with high levels of employment contributes to the high marriage rates of Mexican immigrant women, within education groups (Choi and Mare 2011; Duncan et al. 2006; Oropesa et al. 1994).

Race, ethnic, and nativity variations in union formation also may be due to cultural differences in family organization. Some scholars argue that Blacks have lower marriage rates than Whites because conjugal relations are less integral to the African American family system in which assistance and support traditionally come from maternal kin (Cherlin 1998; Pagnini and Morgan 1996). In contrast, the high marriage rates of Mexican immigrants are often attributed to familism or the greater commitment of Mexican Americans to the creation and maintenance of familial ties. Conjugal bonds are essential components of Mexican American family life where childbearing and marriage are coupled (Oropesa 1996; Oropesa et al. 1994; Landale et al. 2006). Both behavioral and attitudinal studies document Mexican Americans' favorable orientation toward marriage. Mexican Americans marry at rates similar to Whites' despite Mexican

Americans' disadvantaged economic status (Oropesa et al. 1994; Raley et al. 2004). Compared to Whites, Mexican Americans also report more favorable views about marriage or cohabitations in which partners have concrete plans to marry (Oropesa 1996). However, ethnographic evidence suggests that how Mexican Americans "do family" changes the longer they have been in the United States as Mexican American families identify ways of being American and adapt to life in the United States (Winders, forthcoming).

Explanations for differences in union formation between immigrants and the U.S.-born, however, must also take into account selective migration and the effects of the migration process itself on immigrant women's opportunities and preferences for cohabitation and marriage. The family reunification provision in U.S. immigration policies, combined with the male-dominated Mexico-U.S.-migration stream, affect the marital status composition of female immigrants from Mexico. Because documented Mexican immigrant women usually enter the United States as the spouse of a documented migrant or U.S. citizen (Donato et al. 2008; Raley et al. 2004), the higher rates of marriage among all foreign-born Mexicans relative to U.S.-born Mexican American women may be, in part, a product of this policy.

Race, ethnic, and nativity differences in childbearing, childrearing, and legitimation

Cohabitation is increasingly becoming an institution for childbearing and childrearing. About two fifths of children spend part of childhood living with a parent and his or her cohabiting partner. Children in recent cohorts are more likely to have been born in cohabiting unions: 18% of those born in 1997-2001 were born to cohabiting parents compared to only 11% of those born 1990-94 (Kennedy and Bumpass 2008). This is due to increases in the proportion of women who cohabit, the proportion that become pregnant in cohabitation, and the proportion who remain in cohabitation following a pregnancy (Raley 2001).

Whites are less likely to treat cohabitation as a setting for childbearing and rearing than are Hispanics and Blacks. Compared to these groups, Whites are less likely to become pregnant in cohabiting unions, and White cohabiters who do become pregnant are more likely to "legitimate" these pregnancies by marrying instead of remaining in the cohabiting union (Manning 2001; Osborne et al. 2007). That Hispanic cohabiters are more likely to have planned their pregnancies than White or Black cohabiters (Manning 2001; Musick 2002) suggests that Hispanics are more likely than women in other groups to view cohabitation as an appropriate setting for childrearing.

The fertility of immigrants and the native born provides a window on the process of acculturation (Bean et al. 1984; Parrado and Morgan 2008; Rosenwaike 1973). Foreign-born Hispanics are more likely than U.S.-born Hispanics to bear children in cohabiting unions and to remain cohabiting following a nonmarital birth (Kennedy and Bumpass 2008; Wildsmith and Raley 2005). This supports the view that some Latin American immigrants treat cohabitation or consensual unions as a substitute for legal marriage. Exposure to U.S. society where cohabitation is likely to be an unstable relationship that is not equivalent to marriage for childbearing reduces the differences between U.S.-born Hispanics and Whites in the union contexts of fertility (Wildsmith and Raley 2006).

Proximate determinants of fertility, such as differences in union formation and exposure to the risk of becoming pregnant in unions, contribute to group differences in the union context of childbearing and legitimation behavior. Union formation, fertility, and union dissolution are interrelated behaviors that are components of an individual's family building process. Decisions about the timing and sequence of each event are likely to be made at the same time (Brien et al. 1999; Musick 2007). Therefore, many of the explanations used to describe fertility differentials

in cohabitation are largely extensions of socioeconomic and cultural explanations regarding race and ethnic variations in union formation and dissolution (Raley and Sweeney 2009).

Variation in the perceived stability of unions and expected outcome of cohabitation contributes to race, ethnic, and nativity differences in fertility in cohabiting relationships. Childrearing requires long-term investments of time, money, and emotional resources. Women may avoid pregnancy in cohabiting unions if they perceive these unions to be relatively casual, short-term living arrangements. When they expect their unions to be long-lasting and marriage-like, childbearing in cohabitation becomes more feasible. In contrast, if cohabitation is a stage in the courtship process leading to marriage, women may postpone childbearing until marriage.

Race, Ethnic, and Nativity Differences in the Transition to Marriage or Dissolution of Cohabiting Unions

How long cohabitations last and whether they result in marriage provide additional demographic clues about the meaning of cohabitation. That about half of first cohabitations end in marriage (Kennedy and Bumpass 2008) suggests that for many couples cohabitation is a stage in the courtship process or an engagement. Most cohabiting unions are short whether they end in marriage or the couple separates.[3]

The duration and outcome of cohabitation, however, vary by race, ethnicity, and nativity status. For Whites, cohabitation is a short-lived union usually ending in marriage. For Blacks, cohabitation is also short-lived but usually ends by the couple dissolving their relationship rather than marrying. For Hispanics, consistent with evidence on childbearing in cohabiting relationships, cohabitation lasts longer than for Whites and Blacks. Hispanic cohabiting unions are less likely to lead to either marriage or the dissolution of the relationship (Bramlett and

[3] Cohabitations have become somewhat longer lasting in recent years, but most remain short (Bumpass and Lu 2000; Kennedy and Bumpass 2008).

Mosher 2002; Casper and Bianchi 2002; Oropesa and Landale 2004). Variation in the duration and outcome of cohabitation may be due to socioeconomic disparities by race and ethnicity, which influence individuals' ability to meet the perceived economic requirements of marriage and to maintain their partnership in the face of the financial strains, which sometimes lead couples to cohabit instead of marry in the first place (Edin et al. 2004; Smock and Manning 1995; Sweeney and Phillips 2005).

Little is known about how the duration and outcome of cohabitation varies by nativity. Based on prior findings, we surmise that cohabiting unions among foreign-born Mexican Americans will last longer than those of their U.S.-born counterparts. Foreign-born Mexicans are more likely to view cohabitation as equivalent to legal marriage due to the cultural history of long-term consensual unions in Latin America among individuals of low socioeconomic status (Castro Martin 2002; Oropesa 1996). In addition, by having children in cohabiting unions, foreign-born Mexicans may further solidify their cohabiting union because children are a relationship-specific investment.

Summary

The race, ethnic, and nativity differentials in union formation, fertility, and transitions from cohabitation to marriage or dissolution suggest variation in the demographic meaning of cohabitation. Based on past research, we expect that the demographic behavior of foreign-born Mexicans will favor marriage over cohabitation as a first union. However, if foreign-born Mexican women do cohabit, they will treat cohabitation as a surrogate for legal marriage, bearing children in these unions and remaining with their partner without marrying him.

Among the U.S.-born, we expect Whites to treat cohabitation as an engagement leading to marriage, delaying childbearing until after marriage, and, if they become pregnant in a

cohabiting union, marrying their partner before the child is born. For Blacks, we expect cohabitation to be a short-term, transitional relationship between periods of singlehood, rather than a precursor to marriage. Black women are likely to separate childbearing from being in any type of co-residential union – cohabitation or marriage – but among cohabiting women who do become pregnant, remaining in the cohabiting union as the childrearing setting will be more common than marriage.

Cohabiting patterns for U.S.-born Mexican Americans are likely to fall between the cohabiting behavior of foreign-born Mexicans and women born in the United States if familism and normative expectations about the marriage-like obligations of consensual unions erode with prolonged exposure to U.S. family life. The low socioeconomic status of second generation Mexican Americans is likely to contribute to high rates of nonmarital fertility, but the importance of consensual unions in Mexican heritage may increase the likelihood that nonmarital births will occur in cohabiting unions instead of to women without a co-residential partner.

DATA AND METHODS

Data

We use data from the 1995 and 2002 National Surveys of Family Growth. Both are cross-sectional national probability samples of women between the ages of 15 and 44 years old (N= 10,847 in 1995; 7,643 in 2002) (Bramlett and Mosher 2002; Mosher 1998; U.S. DHHS 2006).[4] The 1995 and 2002 NSFGs collected current union status and retrospective histories of marriage, cohabitation, and fertility in which respondents reported entry and exit dates for all marriages, whether each marriage was preceded by cohabitation, and up to 8 prior cohabitations.

The 1995 and 2002 NSFGs sampled Hispanic and Black women at higher probabilities than women in other race-ethnic groups, but using different strategies. For the 1995 sample a

[4] The 2002 NSFG was the first to include a sample of men, but we use data on women only as explained in the text.

randomly selected woman was chosen from all households including Hispanic or Black women in the 1993 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). The 1995 NSFG sampled other households from the NHIS at a lower rate (Massey et al. 1989; Mosher 1998; Potter et al. 1998). The 2002 NSFG is a nationally representative sample of households supplemented by a sample from census blocks with high concentrations of Hispanics (Lepkowski 2006). The oversamples in 1995 and 2002 allow us to obtain reliable estimates of the cohabiting behavior of U.S.-born Mexican Americans, and foreign-born Mexican Americans by pooling the two samples.

Despite the advantages of pooling the samples, this approach has drawbacks. The different sample designs for 1995 and 2002 NSFGs may lead to overestimates of change in the cohabiting behavior of Mexican Americans. In 2002, the selection of blocks with large concentrations of Hispanics is likely to result in a higher proportion of recent immigrants than in the 1995 NSFG because recent Mexican migrants initially settle in areas with high concentrations of Hispanics, but move to areas with lower concentrations as they assimilate (Leach 2005; Newman and Tienda 1994). In fact, 24% of the foreign-born Mexicans in the 2002 NSFG had migrated to the United States within 5 years of the interview date, compared to only 7% of foreign-born Mexicans in the 1995 NSFG. Sample sizes are too small to allow us to control statistically for this compositional difference between the 1995 and 2002 samples.

Pooling the NSFGs also means that some variables that ideally would be included in a study of cohabitation cannot be taken into account due to changes in interview content. The 2002 NSFG does not include the retrospective histories of education and employment that were in the 1995 interview. Despite these limitations, the NSFG remains the best dataset for studying recent trends and differences in women's cohabitation and fertility.

Sample

The analysis uses data on U.S.-born Whites, U.S.-born Blacks, U.S.-born Mexican Americans, and foreign-born Mexicans ages 22 to 37 years old. We use data on women only because 2002 was the first year the NSFG collected data from men. The single year does not provide a sufficiently large sample of foreign and U.S.-born Mexican American men. Women ages 22 to 37 are from birth cohorts in both the 1995 and 2002 samples. The event history analyses (described below) assume that the risks of entering a first union, becoming pregnant for the first time, and ending the first cohabitation begin at age 15. Therefore, we exclude women who reported having entered a union or given birth before age 15 (n = 196) and women with incomplete or inconsistent data on the timing of marriage, cohabitation, and pregnancies (n = 151). The analytic sample includes 8,428 women: 5,370 Whites; 2,024 Blacks; 538 U.S-born Mexican Americans; and 496 foreign-born Mexican Americans.

Variables

Race, ethnic, nativity group status: We use self reports about race, ethnicity, and nativity to construct a variable that distinguishes: U.S.-born Whites, U.S.-born Blacks, U.S.-born Mexican Americans, and foreign-born Mexicans.

Control variables. The multivariate analyses control for a limited number of variables that indicate the respondent's family background and socioeconomic status, which previous research has shown to affect union formation, fertility, and union dissolution. We control for mother's education, family structure while growing up, and respondent's education, as well as survey year.

Mother's education is a three-category variable that identifies women whose mothers completed less than high school, high school, or some postsecondary education. We also include

a dichotomous variable to indicate cases with missing data on mother's education.

Childhood family structure distinguishes four living arrangements at age 14: whether the respondent lived with both biological/adoptive parents; a mother and stepfather; a single mother, or in another type of household.

Respondent's highest level of completed schooling is a four-category variable: less than high school, high school degree, some college, and college graduate or more schooling. Less than high school identifies women with fewer than 12 years of school and no high school degree or GED. High school degree includes those who completed 12 years of school or received a high school diploma or GED. Some college includes those with 13 to 15 years of schooling. Those who are at least college graduates are women with 16 or more years of schooling.

Survey year indicates whether the interview year was 1995 or 2002.

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the sample by survey year. Data are weighted using the year-specific final post-stratified, adjusted weights to obtain nationally representative estimates (Abma et al., 1997; U.S. DHHS, 2004).

Table 1 here.

About three quarters of the women in the pooled sample are U.S.-born non-Hispanic Whites. The distributions of most variables are very similar for the two survey years, with the exception of the education variables, which indicate somewhat higher levels of completed schooling for women and their mothers in 2002 than in 1995. Table 1 also shows that a slightly higher percentage of women in the 2002 survey lived with both biological/adoptive parents in childhood compared to women in the 1995 survey (70% vs. 66%, respectively), a difference which may be due to a change in question wording. We control for these characteristics in the multivariate analyses.

Table 2 shows the characteristics of women in the four race, ethnicity, and nativity groups. As expected, foreign-born Mexican women come from the least educated families. The vast majority of women, 88%, have mothers who did not complete high school. U.S.-born Mexican Americans also come from families with low levels of schooling compared to U.S.-born Blacks and Whites; 53% of the mothers of U.S.-born Mexican Americans did not complete high school, compared to 30% of Blacks and 17% of Whites. The very small percentage of foreign-born Mexican women whose mothers went beyond high school means that the multivariate analyses must use a less fine-grained education variable for mothers than for daughters. The educational disadvantages in the mother's generation are also evident in the respondent's own generation, but the gradient is less steep. These differences among the race, ethnic, and nativity groups may contribute to group differences in cohabitation.

Table 2 here.

Analysis Plan

The analysis has three parts. All focus on first co-residential unions and do not examine subsequent unions. We begin by investigating transitions into first unions, distinguishing between transitions to first cohabitations compared to first marriages. We then ask who becomes a parent in their first premarital cohabiting relationship, how this compares to the transition to parenthood in a first marriage, and whether women who have never been in a co-residential union and experience a non-union pregnancy, either begin to cohabit or marry by the time their first child is born. The last part of the analysis examines the duration of first premarital cohabitations and whether the union ends in marriage or the couple separates. In each part of the analysis, we examine race, ethnic, and nativity differences, with attention to differences between U.S.-born and foreign-born Mexican Americans.

The analysis uses descriptive tabulations, life table estimates, and event history models. All analyses use weighted data to account for unequal probabilities of sample selection. Life table estimates and event history analyses are based on person-month data files constructed from the detailed retrospective histories of marriage, cohabitation, and fertility. Age is the clock for the analysis of union formation where observations are censored at entry into first union or interview date. Union duration is the clock for the fertility analysis where observations are censored at the initiation of first pregnancy or date of interview. We define initiation of first pregnancy as 7 months before the first live birth, as in previous research (Manning 2001; Raley 2001).[5] Union duration is also the clock for the analysis of cohabitation outcomes (marriage or dissolution). Observations are censored at the end of the first cohabiting union or interview date. All person-month files are restricted to months when women were at risk for the particular event. For example, the analysis of first pregnancies in first unions includes only person months from women in first co-residential unions who had not had a first pregnancy.

We estimate life tables following common practice in analyses of exposure to cohabitation (Bumpass and Lu 2000; Bumpass and Sweet 1989). These estimates are computed using 3-month intervals to ensure robust estimates of group differences. Each interval has at least 72 observations for each race, ethnic, and nativity group. Because most women in their first pre-marital co-residential union experience a first pregnancy within 24 months, we use closed interval life tables[6] which censor the analysis at 24 months. Similarly, small numbers of events motivate us to censor dissolution rates at 36 months.

[5] We ignore pregnancies that do not result in a live birth. The NSFG data underestimate abortions and miscarriages (Fu et al.1998; Jones and Kost 2007). Although the incidence of these events may vary by race, ethnicity, nativity, and union status, investigating these differentials is beyond the scope of this paper. See Raley et al. (2004) who also restrict attention to live births in their study of Mexican American marriage patterns.

[6] We replicated the analysis with open intervals, and the results are the same as for the closed interval life tables.

We estimate discrete-time logistic and multinomial logistic regression models predicting the formation of first unions, first pregnancies in a first union, and the dissolution of first unions. These analyses are computed using the person-month files. The multivariate models include the individual's race, ethnicity, and nativity and the control variables described above to account for family background and socioeconomic differences among the groups. Each model also includes a series of dummy variables for age (or duration) to take account of the temporal dependence of the processes.

Because failure to account for non-proportionality can yield biased estimates, we conducted statistical tests to examine if the baseline hazards for each outcome – entry into first union, first pregnancy in cohabitation or marriage, dissolution of first union – are proportional for the four race, ethnic, and nativity groups (Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn 2001). The baseline hazards for the models of first union formation, marital fertility, and dissolution are not proportional by race, ethnicity, and nativity (not shown). To account for non-proportionality we include interactions of age (or duration) and race, ethnicity, and nativity in these models. Results from these multivariate analyses are presented in figures depicting the predicted cumulative percentages of women who engaged in the cohabiting behavior of interest by age (or duration) for the four race, ethnic, and nativity groups. We chose this approach over presenting tabular results because the parameters for the many interaction terms make race, ethnic, and nativity differences difficult to interpret without the figures. Detailed tables are in the Appendix.

We cannot include in the analyses direct measures of culture or women's attitudes prior to the cohabitation and fertility outcomes we investigate because we use data from retrospective reports. We adopt the common strategy of attributing the race, ethnic, and nativity differences in family behavior that remain net of statistical controls for family background and socioeconomic

status as cultural differences. This strategy has obvious disadvantages. Interpretation of the residual differences as attributable to cultural differences will overstate the importance of group differences in attitudes and values because we cannot include statistical controls for all of the socioeconomic characteristics that affect cohabitation. We consider the implications of this demographic strategy in the discussion section. The reliance on retrospective reports raises another potential concern if the quality of reports about cohabitation deteriorates the longer the recall period (Hayford and Morgan 2008) or is better for unions in which children were born (Strohm 2010). To address this concern, we conducted a sensitivity check by comparing the results from our multivariate analyses of all first unions with those from analyses using a restricted sample of first unions formed within 10 years of the interview dates. Our conclusions about race, ethnic, and nativity differences in union formation remain the same. There were small differences in results for first births in first cohabiting unions and the outcomes of cohabiting unions (marriage vs. breaking up). We discuss these in the results section.

RESULTS

Current and Past Cohabitation Experience

The period increase in cohabitation is evident in Table 3. The percentage of women who have ever cohabited increased for each of the four race, ethnic, and nativity groups between 1995 and 2002, results similar to those of Kennedy and Bumpass (2008). For instance, the percentage of Whites who have ever cohabited increased from 50% to 61% between 1995 and 2002. The same trend is evident in the estimate for premarital cohabitation. In 1995, 44% of White women had cohabited before their first marriage; by 2002, this figure had risen to 56%. The percent of women currently cohabiting also rose somewhat for all groups except U.S.-born Whites. In 1995, 9% of Blacks and U.S.-born Mexican Americans were in cohabiting unions whereas, but

by 2002, 11% of women in both groups were cohabiting.

Table 3 here.

Women's current and cumulative cohabitation experiences vary little by race and ethnicity. Instead, the demarcating difference is nativity status. Foreign-born Mexicans are more likely than women in the other groups to be in a cohabiting union. In 2002, 18% of foreign-born Mexicans were cohabiting, twice as high as the percentage of Whites.[7] In contrast, foreign-born Mexicans are substantially less likely than women in other groups to have ever been in a co-residential union. In 2002, fewer than half of foreign-born Mexicans had ever cohabited, only 42%, compared to 55% of U.S.-born Mexican Americans and over 60% of Whites and Blacks. The patterns are similar in 1995 albeit at lower levels. That foreign-born Mexicans are more likely to be cohabiting at the time of interview than women in other groups, but less likely to have ever cohabited, suggests that only a small group of foreign-born Mexicans form cohabiting unions, but the unions they form last longer than cohabiting unions for U.S.-born women. We investigate this further below.

Entry into First Cohabitation or First Marriage

The results summarized in Figures 1A and 1B show the cumulative predicted percentages of women in each race, ethnic, nativity group who entered a first cohabiting relationship (1A) and first marriage (1B) by age, taking account of family background and women's education. The predictions use parameters from a discrete-time multinomial logistic regression and are for a hypothetical woman whose mother completed fewer than12 years of school, who grew up with both biological/adoptive parents, who herself completed 12 years of school or holds a high school diploma or GED, and was interviewed in 2002. (See Appendix

[7] Foreign-born Mexican women had an even greater increase between 1995 and 2002 than other women in the percentage currently cohabiting, 12% vs. 18%, but this difference may be due to the change in sampling frames.

Table A1 for full models.)

Figures 1A and 1B here.

Figure 1A shows that at younger ages, U.S.-born Mexican Americans and Whites are about equally likely to cohabit, but by their mid-20s, Whites appear more likely to form first cohabiting unions. This difference for U.S.-born Mexican Americans and Whites is statistically significant for women in their 20s. As women age, the percentage of U.S.-born Mexican Americans entering first cohabiting relationships eventually falls between the percentages of Whites and foreign-born Mexicans. Foreign-born Mexicans and U.S.-born Blacks have the lowest rates of entry into cohabitation at most ages.

Foreign-born Mexicans are more likely than other women to marry as their first co-residential union, as Figure 1B shows. Blacks are considerably less likely than women in other groups to have married by age 30. Figure 1B shows that by this age, 16% of Black women marry as their first union, compared to 48% for Whites, 49% for U.S-born Mexican Americans, and 55% of foreign-born Mexicans, once group differences in socioeconomic characteristics are taken into account.

Cohabitation, Childbearing, and Legitimation

We investigate cohabitation as a setting for childbearing in four ways. We begin with life table estimates to describe how the likelihood of experiencing a first pregnancy in cohabitation and marriage varies by race, ethnicity, and nativity and by union duration. We then compare predicted probabilities of experiencing a first pregnancy in cohabitation and in marriage for the four race, ethnicity, and nativity groups based on hazard rates estimated in an event history analysis that controls for socioeconomic status and family background. We present the multivariate results in figures and tables. We also investigate whether the likelihood of having a

first pregnancy in first cohabitation compared to first marriage differs by race, ethnicity, and nativity. Finally, we use simple percentages to describe the "legitimation" behavior of cohabiting and single women following a pregnancy, focusing on whether cohabiting women marry by the time their child is born and whether single women cohabit or marry before the birth. Small sample sizes prevent a multivariate analysis of legitimation behavior.

Given the persistent normative preference for marital childbearing in the United States, it is not surprising that married women are more likely than cohabiting women to become pregnant, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or nativity. Life table estimates in Table 4 show that 30% of married women had become pregnant after two years of marriage, compared to only 11% of cohabiting women. Foreign-born Mexicans are much more likely to become pregnant in both types of first union; 63% of married women and 55% of cohabiting women had become pregnant by two years into their unions. This compares to Whites where 27% of married women and 9% of cohabiting women had experienced their first pregnancies within two years. For both U.S.-born Mexican Americans and Blacks the likelihood of becoming pregnant in marriage is 1.5 times as high as in cohabiting unions, but Mexican Americans' pregnancy rates are higher than Blacks' in both union types. The unadjusted fertility difference by type of first union is smaller for foreign-born Mexicans than for women in the U.S.-born groups.

Table 4 here.

We investigate whether group differences in family background and women's education account for the higher pregnancy rates and greater similarity between cohabitation and marriage for foreign-born Mexicans. Figures 2A and 2B show the adjusted cumulative percentages of women who experience a first pregnancy in their first cohabiting union (2A) or first marriage (2B). Predicted percentages are calculated using parameters from two separate discrete-time

logistic regressions. The predictions are for hypothetical women with the same characteristics as those in the union formation analyses. (See Appendix Table A2 for full models.)

Figures 2A and 2B here.

The results summarized in Figure 2A show that foreign-born Mexicans still have higher pregnancy rates in cohabiting unions than do U.S.-born Whites, Blacks, and Mexican Americans after differences in education and background characteristics are taken into account. Adjusting for compositional differences, foreign-born Mexicans are about 2.6 times as likely as Blacks (36/14) and 3.6 times as likely as Whites (36/10) to experience a first pregnancy within two years of cohabitation.[8] This compares to unadjusted differences of 3.2 for Blacks (55/17) and 6.1 for Whites (55/9) in the percentage experiencing a first pregnancy in cohabitation, as shown in Table 4. Differences in education and background characteristics, however, do little to explain the higher first pregnancy rates for cohabiting foreign-born and U.S.-born Mexican Americans. Foreign-born Mexicans continue to be about twice as likely as U.S.-born Mexican Americans to experience their first pregnancy within two years of cohabitation (36/18, adjusted) and (55/27, unadjusted), even after taking into account education and family background differences.

Unlike fertility differences in cohabitation, nativity differences in marital fertility increase once we control for education and family background. Figure 2B presents the adjusted percentages of women whose first pregnancy occurred in first marriage. Foreign-born Mexicans are nearly 5 times as likely as U.S.-born Mexican Americans (58/12) to experience a first pregnancy within two years of marriage, compared to 1.5 times as likely (63/42) using the unadjusted percentages in Table 4. Net differences in levels of marital fertility by nativity status are large in the early years of marriages. Close to 40% of foreign-born Mexicans who

[8] The adjusted difference between foreign-born Mexicans and Blacks was higher, 3.7 (44/12) for the sample of cohabiting unions formed within 10 years of the interview date. Other group differences remained approximately the same in this consistency check.

experienced their first pregnancy in marriage got pregnant within 6 months of marrying, compared to only 5% of U.S.-born Mexican American women. Most of the differences in marital pregnancy rates among U.S.-born women disappear once we control for socioeconomic status and family background.

Pregnancy rates are much lower in cohabiting relationships than in marriages with and without controls for family background and education, which suggests that marriage is still the preferred setting for childbearing. The results in Figures 2A and 2B, however, do not address the question of whether the race, ethnic, and nativity groups differ in the extent to which couples treat cohabitation and marriage as similarly appropriate contexts for childbearing. To answer this question we pool data from the analyses of pregnancies in cohabitation and marriage and estimate a third discrete-time logistic regression of first pregnancy as a function of type of first union (cohabitation or marriage), group status, the interaction of union type and group status, and the same control variables as in the union-specific analyses (not shown).

Foreign-born Mexicans and Whites are more likely to have a first pregnancy in marriage than in cohabitation, net of group differences in background. The union type difference is statistically significant for both Whites and foreign-born Mexicans, but the two groups do not differ statistically. This suggests that if Whites and foreign-born Mexicans had similar family and educational backgrounds, women in both groups would be equally likely to prefer marriage over cohabitation as the setting for childbearing. In contrast, U.S.-born Mexican Americans and Blacks are more likely to experience their first pregnancy in cohabitation than in marriage, net of other characteristics. This union type difference is also statistically significant, but U.S-born Mexican Americans and Blacks do not differ from each other in the extent to which they treat

cohabitation as an appropriate context for childbearing.[9]

Whether a woman marries or moves in with her partner after becoming pregnant also provides insight into the type of union that individuals (or couples) consider to be an appropriate setting for childrearing. In Table 5, we report the percentages of cohabiting women who have married by the time their child is born and the percentages of pregnant single women who either marry or begin to cohabit. Small sample sizes require that we combine foreign-born and U.S-born Mexican Americans. Approximately two thirds of women who experienced their first pregnancy in a cohabiting relationship were still cohabiting when their child was born. The majority of cohabiting women who change their union status make the transition to marriage. Single (non-cohabiting) women who become pregnant are typically still single when their child is born. Just over 60% of women who became pregnant while single were still single when they gave birth. Like women who became pregnant while cohabiting, the majority of single women who "legitimate" their children do so by marrying the child's father instead of forming a nonmarital co-residential union.

Table 5 here.

White women who have a nonmarital pregnancy are much more likely than women in other groups to "legitimate" their births by marrying a partner prior to childbirth regardless of their relationship status when they became pregnant. Approximately equal percentages of single and cohabiting White women who became pregnant have married by the time their child is born, about 40%. This compares to only 11% of cohabiting Mexican Americans and 18% of cohabiting Black women who marry by the birth of their child. Mexican American women who became pregnant in cohabiting relationships are less likely than other women to "legitimate"

[9] We estimated group differences alternating the omitted group. The net union type difference between Whites and U.S.-born Mexican Americans is statistically significant, as is that between Whites and Black, between foreign-born and U.S.-born Mexicans Americans, and between foreign-born Mexicans and Blacks.

their children by marrying prior to childbirth; however, among single women, Mexican Americans who became pregnant were much more likely to marry before giving birth than Black women (32% vs. 12%, respectively). Single Mexican American women who become pregnant are almost as likely as White women to marry (32% vs. 41%, respectively). Regardless of their race and ethnicity, single women seldom legitimate their children by forming cohabiting relationships. Fewer than 10% of single women in each race-ethnic group moved in with a cohabiting partner before the child was born.

Stability of Cohabiting Unions and the Transition to Marriage

Whether a cohabiting couple eventually marries and, if they do marry, how quickly this happens is another important indication of whether cohabitation is a stage in the courtship process or an alternative to marriage. Table 6 shows life table estimates of the cumulative percentages of women in their first premarital cohabitation who marry or separate from their partners by union duration. Cohabiting unions of foreign-born Mexicans last longer than those of U.S.-born women. Among foreign-born Mexicans in cohabiting relationships, 60% are still cohabiting after 3 years, but only 26% of U.S.-born White women are in unions that have lasted this long. Whites are more likely than other women to marry their first cohabiting partner: 47% of Whites marry their partners within 3 years of their union, compared to 27% of Blacks and 40% of U.S.-born Mexican Americans. Interestingly, within the first year of a cohabiting relationship, Whites and foreign-born Mexicans have similar marriage rates. At longer durations, however, Whites transition to marriage at higher rates, and the difference between Whites and foreign-born Mexicans widens. This suggests that there may be two types of foreign-born Mexican cohabiters, those for whom cohabitation is a short stage in the courtship process and those for whom it is a surrogate marriage.

Table 6 here.

In line with findings from previous work, Black women are more likely than women in other groups to separate from their first cohabiting partners. Approximately a third of Black women have separated from their first cohabiting partners within three years. This compares to less than a tenth for foreign-born Mexicans and just over a quarter for Whites.

We investigated whether these group differences in the duration and outcomes of first cohabiting unions can be explained by other characteristics of women that vary across groups. Figures 3A and 3B show the adjusted cumulative percentages of cohabitations ending in marriage (3A) or dissolving (3B) by race, ethnicity, and nativity. Predictions use parameter estimates from a discrete-time multinomial logistic regression controlling for family background and socioeconomic status, and are reported for the same hypothetical woman as in the previous figures. (See Appendix Table A3 for detailed results.) The pattern in Figure 3A is generally consistent with that in Table 6. Compared to other women, Whites are more likely to marry their first cohabiting partners. Foreign-born Mexicans are less likely than U.S.-born Whites and U.S.-born Mexican Americans to transition to marriage. The adjusted cumulative percentages of foreign-born Mexicans who marry their partner are very similar to those of U.S.-born Blacks. U.S.-born Mexican Americans are midway between those of Whites and foreign-born Mexican Americans. U.S.-born Mexican Americans are more likely than foreign-born Mexicans but less likely than Whites to marry their cohabiting partner.[10]

Figures 3A and 3B here.

The cohabiting relationships of foreign-born Mexicans tend to last longer than those of

[10]Whites' higher rates of transition to marriage are still evident in the sample of first cohabitations that began within 10 years of the interview date. However, foreign-born and U.S.-born Mexican Americans are more similar to each other in the cumulative percentages who transition into marriage than for the full period due the higher adjusted rates of transitions from cohabitation to marriage among foreign-born Mexicans.

women in other groups, even after adjusting for differences in socioeconomic status and background. Figure 3B shows that foreign-born Mexicans are less likely than women in other groups to separate from their cohabiting partner. Other groups differ relatively little in their dissolution rates once background characteristics are taken into account. The adjusted percentages of women whose relationships breakup are substantially lower than the unadjusted percentages, suggesting that family background and women's education are important determinants of union stability.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The demographic processes of cohabitating union and marriage formation, childbearing, and dissolution provide insight into the meaning of cohabitation and its place in the kinship system. Table 7 summarizes the implications of our key findings for ideal-type characterizations of the demographic significance of cohabitation for U.S.-born Whites, Blacks, and Mexican Americans and foreign-born Mexicans.

Table 7 goes here.

Our findings for U.S.-born Whites are consistent with others' observations that cohabitation is a stage in the courtship process or premarital engagement (Casper and Bianchi 2002). Whites' cohabiting unions do not last long, are unlikely to involve childbearing, and are often followed by marriage. Blacks' cohabiting unions, like their marriages, are short-lived compared to the unions of women in other race, ethnic, and nativity groups. Compared to others, Black women are more likely to cohabit than to marry as their first union, and their cohabiting relationships are somewhat more likely to dissolve than to be formalized by marriage. Black single women (i.e., those not in a co-residential union) have high fertility rates compared to other women (Chandra et al. 2005). Those who have their first child in the context of a co-residential

union are more likely to do so in cohabitating relationships than in marriage.

We find pronounced differences between the cohabitation patterns of U.S.-born Mexican Americans and foreign-born Mexicans, where the data allow these comparisons. In fact, some nativity differences in cohabitation are more striking than Black-White differences. Although foreign-born Mexicans are more likely to marry than cohabit as their first union, when they do cohabit, foreign-born Mexicans' unions last longer than U.S.-born women's unions and are likely to involve childbearing. For the minority of foreign-born Mexicans who cohabit, cohabitation appears to substitute for formal marriage.

Cohabiting foreign- and U.S.-born Mexican Americans who get pregnant have lower marriage rates than White women. Nevertheless, most foreign-born Mexicans have their first child in marriage. How much marriage appears to be preferred over cohabitation as a setting for childbearing depends on whether socioeconomic differences between foreign-born and U.S.-born women are taken into account. Our unadjusted results show that differences in first pregnancy rates are much smaller between married and cohabiting foreign-born Mexicans than between U.S.-born married and cohabiting women. However, once we adjust for differences in women's education and family background, the gap between marital and cohabiting fertility increases for foreign-born Mexicans and is more similar to the gap for White women. These findings suggest that foreign-born Mexicans would prefer to have their children in marital rather than cohabiting unions if they were not so socioeconomically disadvantaged.

U.S.-born Mexican Americans have cumulative rates of cohabitation that are between those of foreign-born Mexicans and U.S-born Whites. Processes of assimilation and the educational disadvantages of Mexican Americans which make it more difficult to attain the socially-determined economic prerequisites of marriage probably account for these differences

(Raley et al. 2004). Early school leaving also contributes to the earlier age at first marriage for U.S.-born Mexican Americans compared to Whites (Lloyd 2006; Schneider et al. 2006), as school leaving launches young adults into other aspects of the transition to adulthood such as establishing co-residential unions and parenthood.

That some differences among the race, ethnic, and nativity groups remain even after we control for family and socioeconomic background suggests that differences in attitudes and values about marriage and cohabitation contribute to differences in the types of unions women form. The greater likelihood that foreign-born Mexicans choose marriage as their first union probably reflects the cultural significance of marriage in the Mexican community (Oropesa 1996). The cultural value of marriage is reinforced by U.S. immigration laws that favor married over single women (Oropesa and Landale 2004).

The cultural significance of marriage among foreign-born Mexicans appears to contradict our finding that foreign-born Mexican women also treat cohabitation as a substitute for formal marriage. Yet both may be true. Ideal-type classifications mask important variation within populations. Consensual unions have been institutionalized in Mexico for many years. One relatively recent indication of the greater institutionalization of cohabitation in Mexico than the United States is that the Mexican Census has treated consensual union as a type of marital status on the census since 1930 (Castro Martin 2002). The U.S. Census did not recognize cohabiting unions until 1990. Although marriage is a cultural ideal for foreign-born Mexican women, consensual unions are accepted practice among the economically disadvantaged who may not have the economic resources for a wedding and marriage (Castro Martin 2002; Fussell and Palloni 2004). Less-educated women and their partners may aspire to legal marriage just as they aspire to material aspects of the lifestyle of their more advantaged counterparts, but they choose

cohabiting relationships in the face of economic constraints knowing that there is social acceptance of these informal marriages as a setting for child bearing and rearing. Improved insight about how the social context affects when cohabitations are marriage-like and when they are a courtship stage requires information about the different contexts in which individuals live, including whether Mexican immigrants were in Mexico or the United States when they were likely to form first unions, and the conditions under which they came to the United States (Clark et al. 2009).

The NSFG design that enabled us to pool two cross-sectional samples with retrospective cohabitation histories is a valuable resource for studying the union patterns and fertility of U.S.-born and foreign-born Mexican Americans who would not be represented in most single-wave studies in sufficient numbers to support demographic analyses. This strategy of combining data from different surveys has disadvantages as well. We were unable to conduct a more rigorous test of socioeconomic explanations for group differences because some socioeconomic characteristics available in the 1995 NSFG are not in the 2002 NSFG. Because the NSFG is now a continuous survey, future researchers may encounter fewer discontinuities in the measurement and content of information. Studies of small subgroups will still require that investigators combine data across releases of the public data files to obtain sufficient sample sizes.

Our study suffers from two important omitted variables. The first is the absence of direct measures of women's attitudes measured prior to the behavioral outcomes we consider. This is inevitable in cross-sectional designs that rely on retrospective histories for data about union formation and dissolution. The second is the exclusion of information about partners' and potential partners' characteristics. The economic resources available to actual partners (spouses and cohabiting partners) and their views on family behavior are crucial for determining who

marries or cohabits, who becomes a parent, whether children are born in formal marriages, and the stability of unions (Manning and Landale 1996; Oppenheimer et al. 1997). Characteristics of potential partners/spouses also affect these outcomes because potential partners are among the alternatives women face when they consider marriage, becoming pregnant while single or cohabiting, and remaining in a union (Weiss 1997).

These limitations notwithstanding, our findings illustrate the importance of taking into account women's nativity status when investigating race and ethnic differences in cohabitation. Studies that combine the immigrant and U.S.-born members of a race-ethnic group overstate differences among the U.S.-born, underestimate the degree of socioeconomic and cultural integration of contemporary immigrant groups, and gloss over the possibility that some of the differences may be due to the migration processes. The absence of data on the generational status of the native-born population also contributes to variation that, with better data, could shed light on how cultural orientations toward marriage and cohabitation interact with socioeconomic constraints to influence the family lives of young adults. Studies that compare the family behavior of immigrants and the U.S.-born also have the potential to show how receiving communities influence the family patterns of immigrants.

Our study calls attention to the importance of taking into account multiple demographic aspects of unions to better understand the place of cohabitation in the kinship systems. Individuals' decisions about whether or not to form a co-residential union, the choice of cohabitation or marriage, the union context of fertility, and the expected duration of the relationship are interdependent (Brien et al. 1999). At the aggregate level, how other people live their lives provide examples of family arrangements that are viable. Insight from qualitative studies can help direct researchers' attention to which reference groups are important, such as co-

ethnics, family members in the country of origin, and/or the experiences of earlier cohorts.

Lastly, our study extends knowledge about race, ethnic, and nativity group differences that must be explained by theories about union formation and dissolution (Casper et al. 2008). The development of new data sources either by pooling data from existing surveys or by new data collection will enhance researchers' ability to test theories about the meaning of cohabitation and sources of variation in the demographic significance of marital and nonmarital unions.

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TABLES

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics of the Analytical Sample

	1995		2002		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Race, ethnicity, and nativity						
U.S.-born NH White	78	3,333	73	2,037	76	5,370
U.S.-born NH Black	14	1,316	15	708	15	2,024
U.S.-born Mexican American	4	282	5	256	5	538
Foreign-Born Mexican	3	237	6	259	5	496
Total	100	5,168	100	3,260	100	8,428
Mother's education						
Less than high school	26	3,288	21	2,213	24	5,501
High school graduate	45	302	36	308	41	610
Some college or more	28	950	42	398	35	1,348
Missing	1	628	1	341	1	969
Total	100	5,168	100	3,260	100	8,428
Family structure at 14						
Two biological/adoptive parents	66	1,527	70	767	68	2,294
Stepfather, biological mother	6	2,243	10	1,129	8	3,372
Single mother	16	1,372	11	1,331	14	2,703
Other	11	26	9	33	10	59
Total	100	5,168	100	3,260	100	8,428
Respondent's education						
Less than high school	10	604	11	395	10	999
High school graduate	39	2,072	29	985	35	3,057
Some college	25	1,315	29	945	27	2,260
College graduate or more	25	1,177	31	935	28	2,112
Total	100	5,168	100	3,260	100	8,428
Age intervals						
22-24	16	788	18	644	17	1,432
25-29	30	1,476	28	975	29	2,451
30-34	33	1,823	32	1,039	33	2,862
35-37	20	1,081	21	602	21	1,683
Total	100	5,168	100	3,260	100	8,428

Notes: Female respondents ages 22-37. Sample restricted to U.S.-born non-Hispanic (NH) Whites, NH Blacks, Mexican Americans and foreign-born Mexicans. Weighted percentages and unweighted Ns.

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Family Background and Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Analytic Sample by Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity

	U.S.-born			Foreign-born	
	NH White (N=5,370)	NH Black (N=2,024)	Mexican American (N=538)	Mexican (N=496)	Total (N=8,428)
Mother's education					
Less than high school	17	30	53	88	24
High school graduate	45	38	25	6	41
Some college or more	38	32	21	5	35
Missing	1	1	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Family structure at 14					
Two bio/adoptive parents	71	50	70	81	68
Stepfather, biological mother	8	7	6	4	8
Single mother	12	27	13	6	14
Other	9	16	11	10	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Respondent's education					
Less than high school	6	13	23	53	10
High school graduate	34	39	34	30	35
Some college	27	29	30	12	27
College graduate or more	32	18	13	6	28
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Survey year					
1995	54	51	45	37	53
2002	46	49	55	63	48
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Age at survey					
22-24	17	19	24	15	17
25-29	29	29	28	38	29
30-34	33	31	33	31	33
35-37	21	21	14	16	21
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Notes: Female respondents ages 22-37. Weighted percentages and unweighted Ns. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Table 3. Percent of Women Who are Currently Cohabiting, Who Ever Cohabited, and Who Cohabited Before First Marriage by Survey Year and Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity

	Currently Cohabiting			Ever Cohabited			Cohabited Prior to Marriage		
Race, ethnicity, and nativity	1995	2002	Total	1995	2002	Total	1995	2002	Total
U.S.-born NH White	9	9	9	50	61	55	44	56	49
U.S.-born NH Black	9	11	10	48	63	55	44	60	52
U.S.-born Mexican American	9	11	10	51	55	53	41	51	46
Foreign-born Mexican	12	18	16	31	42	38	28	39	35
Total	9	10	10	49	60	54	43	55	49
N	5,168	3,260	8,428	5,168	3,260	8,428	5,168	3,260	8,428

Notes: Female respondents ages 22-37. Weighted percentages and unweighted Ns.

Table 4. Life Table Estimates of the Cumulative Percentage of Women Who Experience A First Pregnancy by Type of First Union and Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity

	Duration (months)								
	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	Base N
A. Cohabitation									
U.S.-born NH White	2	4	5	6	7	8	8	9	2,583
U.S.-born NH Black	4	6	9	11	14	14	16	17	1,025
U.S.-born Mexican American	7	17	19	22	23	25	26	27	248
Foreign-born Mexican	14	28	40	43	47	51	55	55	174
Total	3	6	7	8	9	10	11	11	4,030
B. Marriage									
U.S.-born NH White	3	7	11	14	18	20	24	27	1,715
U.S.-born NH Black	3	10	14	15	18	21	24	26	252
U.S.-born Mexican American	8	16	21	25	31	36	40	42	158
Foreign-born Mexican	16	35	44	48	54	58	60	63	240
Total	4	9	14	17	21	24	28	30	2,365

Notes: Female respondents ages 22-37. We exclude female respondents whose first pregnancies occurred prior to their first co-residential union. Weighted percentages and unweighted Ns.

Table 5. Union Status at Childbirth by Union Status at Pregnancy (Percentages)

Union Status at Pregnancy	Union Status at Birth				
	Single	Cohabiting	Married	Total	N
A. COHABITATION					
U.S.-born NH White	5	57	38	100	284
U.S.-born NH Black	5	77	18	100	159
Mexican American	2	87	11	100	134
Total	4	67	29	100	577
B. SINGLE					
U.S.-born NH White	52	7	41	100	754
U.S.-born NH Black	84	5	12	100	640
Mexican American	60	8	32	100	269
Total	61	7	32	100	1,663

Notes: Female respondents ages 22-37 who experienced their first pregnancy while cohabiting (top panel) or outside a co-residential union (bottom panel). Weighted percentages and unweighted Ns. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Table 6. Life Table Estimates of the Cumulative Percentage of First Cohabitations that Remain Together, End in Marriage, or Dissolve by Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity and by Duration

	Duration (months)											
	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36
U.S.-born NH White												
Remain in cohabitation	93	80	69	62	53	47	42	39	34	31	28	26
Marry	5	14	20	25	30	35	37	39	42	44	46	47
Dissolve	2	7	10	13	16	19	20	22	24	25	26	27
U.S.-born NH Black												
Remain in cohabitation	95	86	79	72	67	62	57	53	49	45	42	41
Marry	3	7	11	14	16	17	19	22	23	25	26	27
Dissolve	2	7	10	14	17	21	23	25	28	31	32	32
U.S.-born Mexican American												
Remain in cohabitation	92	81	77	70	62	57	55	51	48	45	41	36
Marry	5	12	14	20	25	28	29	31	33	34	37	40
Dissolve	2	6	9	10	13	15	16	17	19	20	22	24
Foreign-born Mexican												
Remain in cohabitation	91	80	76	72	70	68	67	65	64	62	61	60
Marry	9	18	21	25	27	27	27	28	29	31	32	33
Dissolve	1	2	3	3	4	5	6	6	6	7	7	7

Notes: Female respondents ages 22-37 who have ever cohabited. Weighted percentages and unweighted Ns.

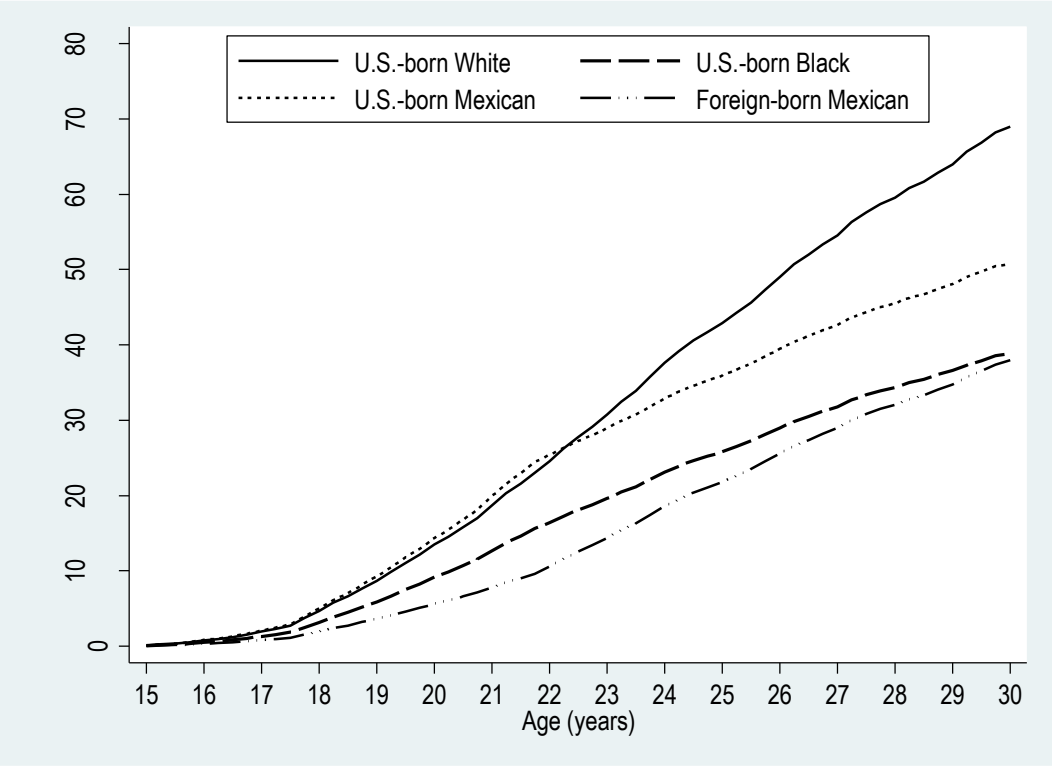
Table 7. Summary of Cohabitation Patterns and Ideal Type by Race, Ethnicity and Nativity

Race, ethnicity, nativity	Ideal type	Outcome	Evidence
U.S.-born NH Whites	Precursor to marriage	Entry into first union	Premarital cohabitation is common
		Childbearing and legitimation	First pregnancy rates higher in marriage than in cohabitation
			Cohabiting and single women who become pregnant marry at high rates
		Stability of cohabitation and transition to marriage	Most cohabiting unions are short durations; many transition to marriage
U.S.-born NH Blacks	Transitory alternative to being single	Entry into first union	Co-residential unions are uncommon
			Cohabitation is more likely than marriage to be the first union
		Childbearing and legitimation	First pregnancies are more likely in cohabitation than in marriage
			Cohabiting women who become pregnant have low marriage rates
			Single women who become pregnant remain unpartnered
		Stability of cohabitation and transition to marriage	Most first cohabitations are relatively short and end in separation
U.S.-born Mexican Americans	Precursor to marriage/ Marriage substitute	Entry into first union	Premarital cohabitation is common
		Childbearing and legitimation	First pregnancies more likely in cohabitation than in marriage
			Cohabiting women who get pregnant have low marriage rates*
			Single women who get pregnant are more likely to marry than cohabit*
		Stability of cohabitation and transition to marriage	Most cohabiting unions are relatively short (2-3 yrs.)
			Almost twice as many cohabiters transition to marriage as separate
Foreign-born Mexicans	Substitute for marriage	Entry into first union	Premarital cohabitation is uncommon
		Childbearing and legitimation	High first pregnancy rates in cohabitation
			Relatively small gap between pregnancy rates in cohabitation and marriage. Gap increases with controls for background characteristics of cohabiting and married women
			Cohabiting women who get pregnant have low marriage rates*
			Single women who get pregnant are more likely to marry than cohabit*
		Stability of cohabitation and transition to marriage	Most cohabiters remain in cohabitation for long periods

*Analyses do not distinguish U.S.-born Mexican Americans and foreign-born Mexicans.

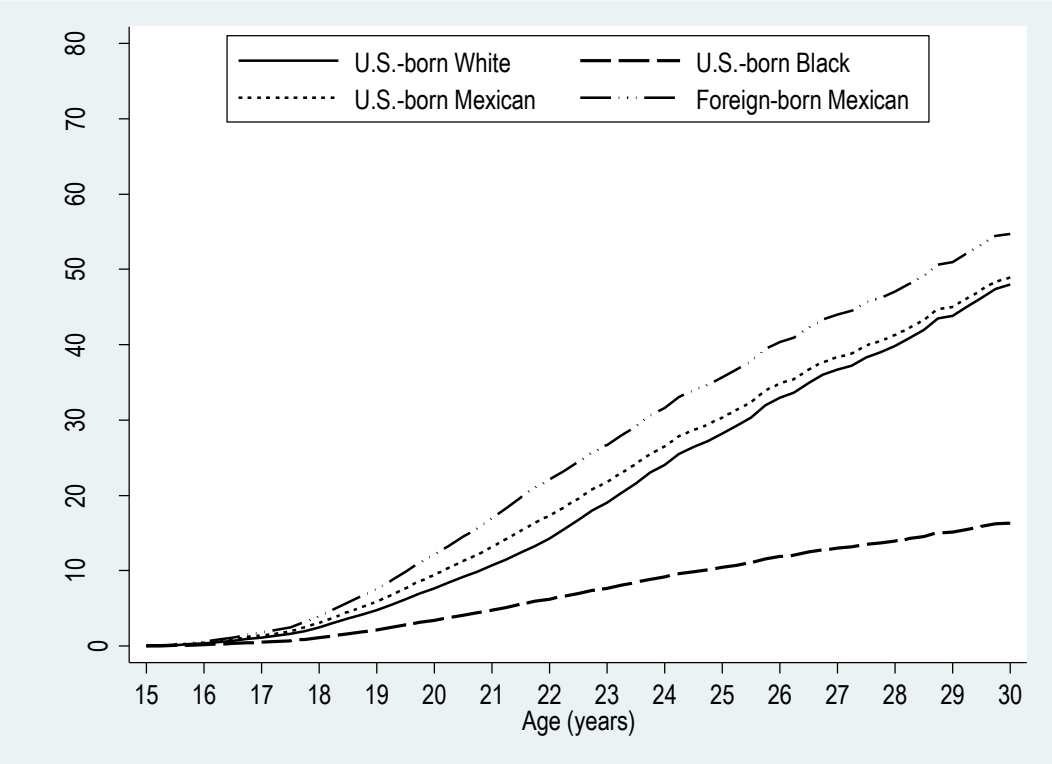
FIGURES

Figure 1A.
Adjusted Cumulative Percentage of Women Who Cohabit as a First Union by Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity



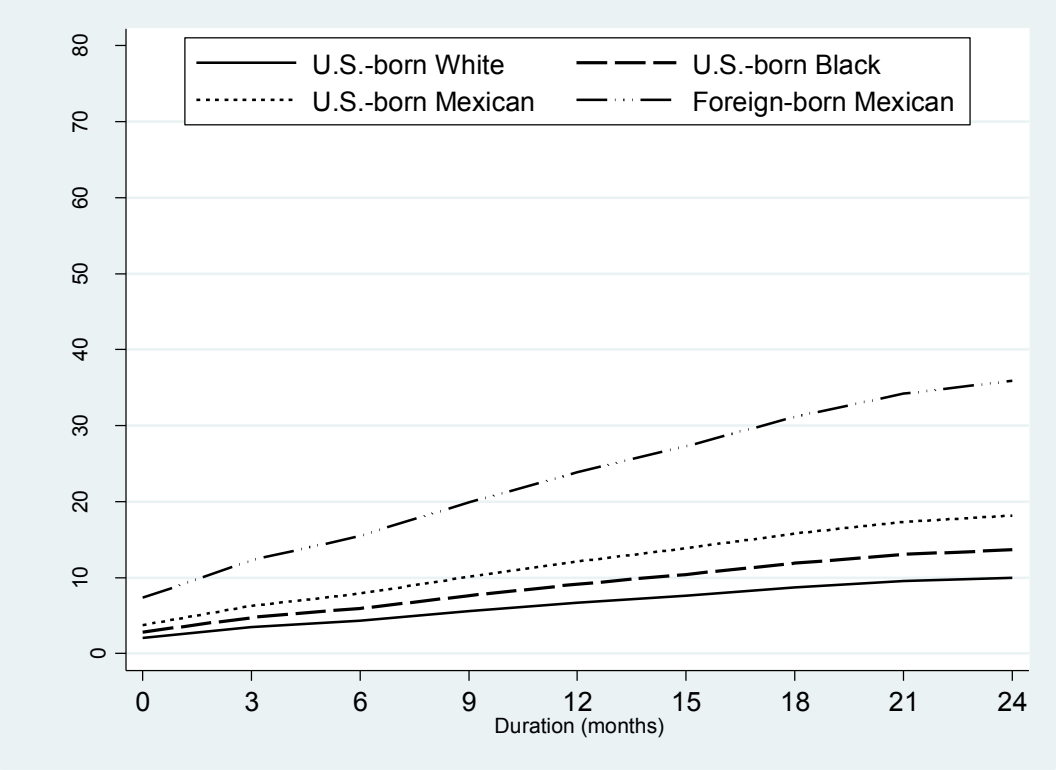
Notes: Results from a discrete-time multinomial logistic regression model predicting entry into cohabitation adjusting for socioeconomic status and family background (see text). Risk begins at age 15. The predictions are for a hypothetical woman whose mother completed fewer than12 years of schooling, who grew up with both biological/adoptive parents, who herself has a high school degree, and was interviewed in 2002.

Figure 1B.
Adjusted Cumulative Percentage of Women Who Marry as a First Union by Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity



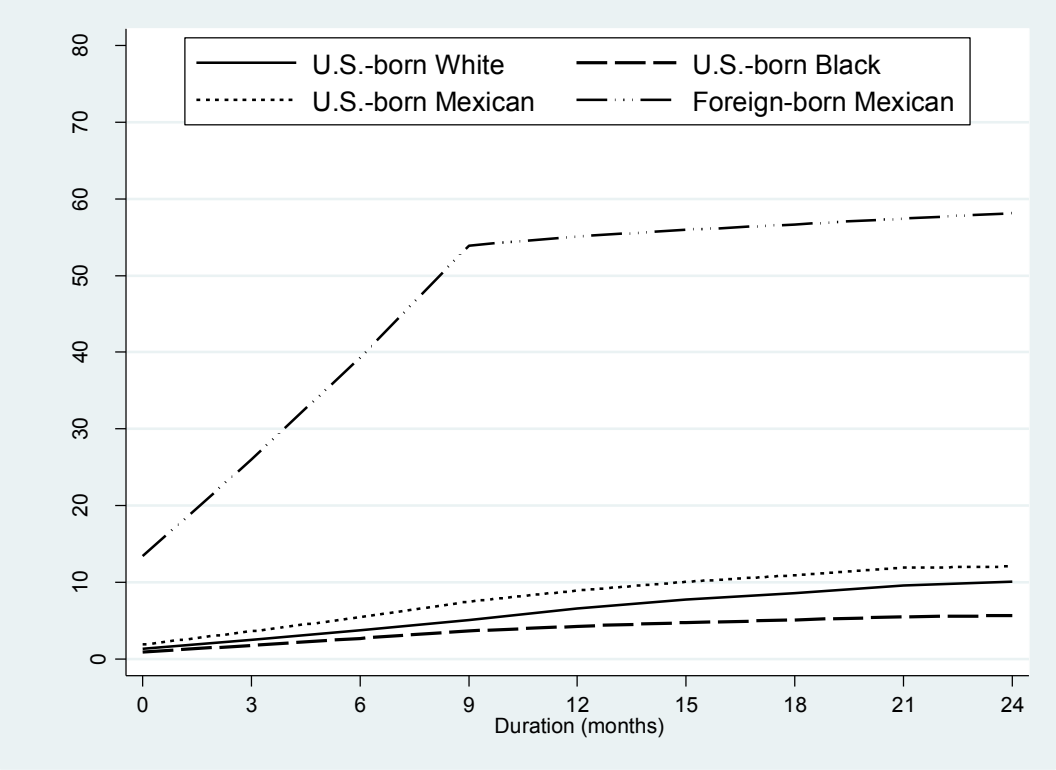
Notes: Results from a discrete-time multinomial logistic regression model predicting entry into marriage adjusting for socioeconomic status and family background (see text). Risk begins at age 15. The predictions are for a hypothetical woman whose mother completed fewer than 12 years of schooling, who grew up with both biological/adoptive parents, who herself has a high school degree, and was interviewed in 2002.

Figure 2A.
Adjusted Cumulative Percentage of Cohabiting Women Who Experience First Pregnancy by Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity



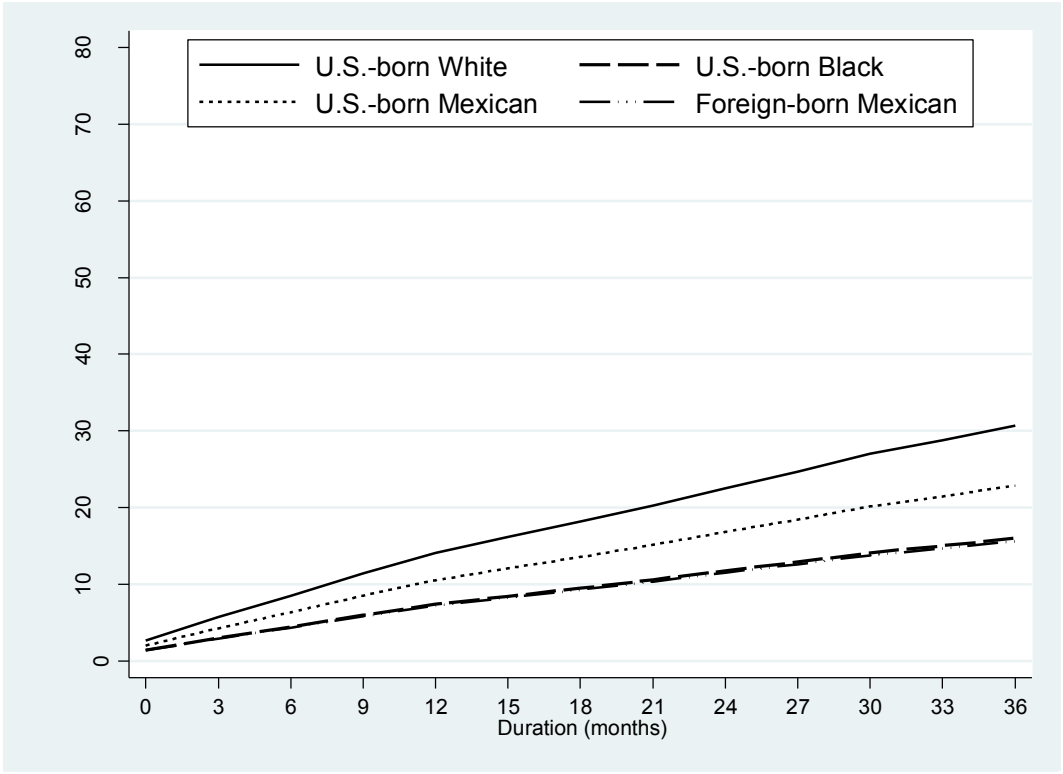
Notes: Results from a discrete-time logistic regression model predicting first pregnancy adjusting for socioeconomic status and family background (see text). Risk of pregnancy begins at the start of cohabitation. The predictions are for a hypothetical woman whose mother completed fewer than12 years of schooling, who grew up with both biological/adoptive parents, who herself has a high school degree, and was interviewed in 2002.

Figure 2B.
Adjusted Cumulative Percentage of Married Women Who Experience First Pregnancy by Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity



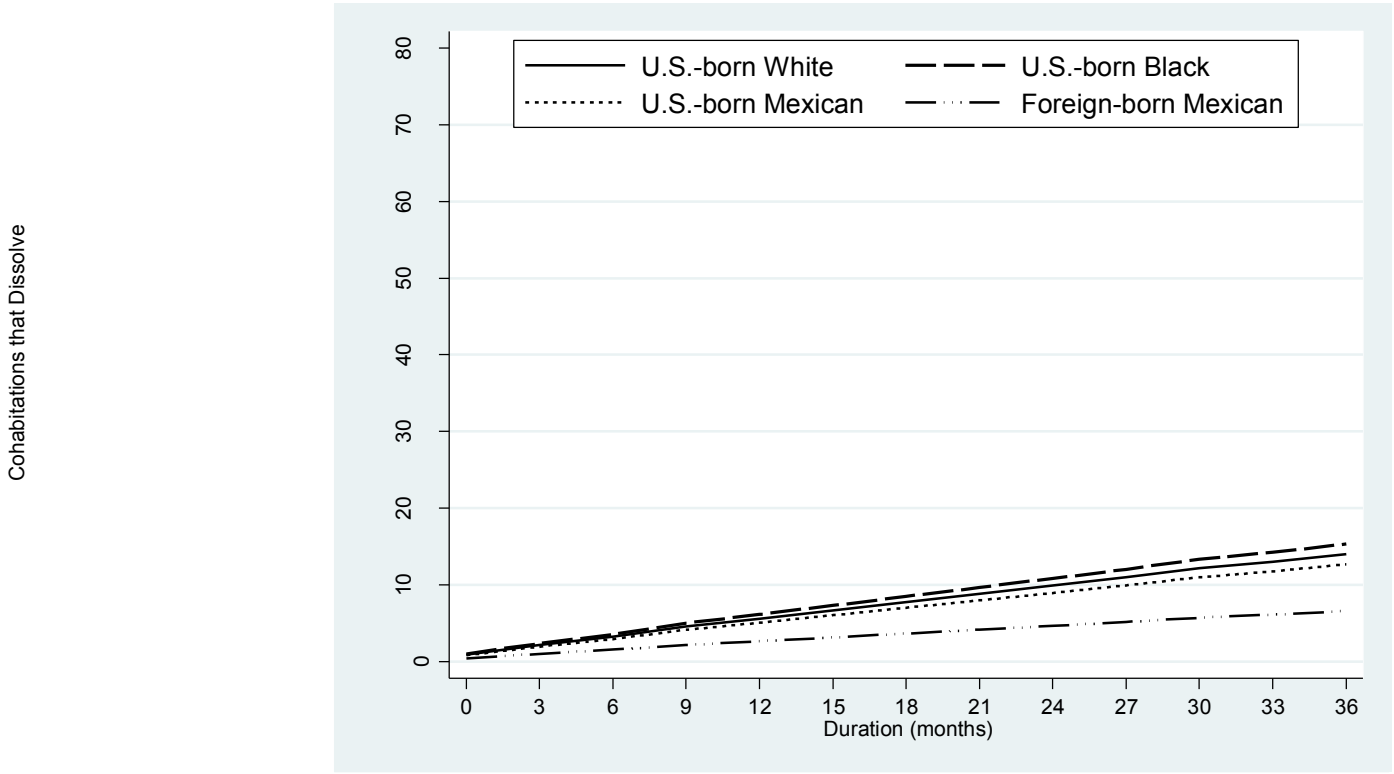
Notes: Results from a discrete-time logistic regression model predicting first pregnancy adjusting for socioeconomic status and family background (see text). Risk of pregnancy begins at the start of marriage. The predictions are for a hypothetical woman whose mother completed fewer than 12 years of schooling, who grew up with both biological/adoptive parents, who herself has a high school degree, and was interviewed in 2002.

Figure 3A.
Adjusted Cumulative Percentage of First Premarital Cohabitations that End in Marriage by Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity



Notes: Results from a discrete-time multinomial logistic regression model predicting dissolution of first cohabitation adjusting for socioeconomic status and family background (see text). Risk begins at start of first cohabiting union. The predictions are for a hypothetical woman whose mother completed fewer than 12 years of schooling, who grew up with both biological/adoptive parents, who herself has a high school degree, and was interviewed in 2002.

Figure 3B.
Adjusted Cumulative Percentage of First Premarital Cohabitations that Dissolve by Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity



Notes: Results from a discrete-time multinomial logistic regression model predicting dissolution of first cohabitation adjusting for socioeconomic status and family background (see text). Risk begins at start of first cohabiting union. The predictions are for a hypothetical woman whose mother completed fewer than 12 years of schooling, who grew up with both biological/adoptive parents, who herself has a high school degree, and was interviewed in 2002.

APPENDIX

Table A1. Discrete-Time Multinomial Logistic Regression Model Predicting Entry into First Co-residential Union by Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity

	Cohabit over Remain Single		Marry over Remain Single	
	β	β/se	β	β/se
Race, ethnicity, and nativity (U.S.-born NH White)				
U.S.-born NH Black	-0.40	-6.27	-0.81	-8.38
U.S.-born Mexican American	0.06	0.69	0.21	2.08
Foreign-born Mexican	-0.88	-5.93	0.46	4.41
Family background at 14 (Two biological parents)				
Stepfather, biological mother	0.65	8.93	0.06	0.63
Single mother	0.26	4.99	-0.26	-3.59
Other	0.48	7.88	-0.33	-4.05
Mother's education (Less than high school)				
High school graduate	-0.05	-0.93	-0.02	-0.27
Some college or more	-0.01	-0.09	-0.19	-2.70
Missing	0.06	0.36	-0.48	-1.18
Respondent's own education (High school graduate)				
Less than high school	0.40	6.10	-0.02	-0.28
Some college	-0.33	-6.58	-0.28	-4.99
College graduate or more	-0.96	-17.09	-0.70	-12.04
Survey year (2002)				
1995	-0.31	-8.01	0.28	5.90
Age interval (240 to 242 months)				
180 -182	-2.85	-8.67	-3.20	-8.08
183-185	-2.40	-9.08	-3.05	-7.80
186-188	-2.56	-10.20	-2.33	-6.99
189-191	-2.18	-9.12	-2.00	-7.27
192-194	-1.50	-8.25	-1.71	-6.68
195-197	-2.11	-9.61	-1.24	-4.71
198-200	-1.66	-7.90	-1.33	-5.97
201-203	-1.46	-8.29	-0.95	-4.71
204-206	-1.22	-6.15	-1.24	-5.59
207-209	-1.35	-6.24	-1.23	-5.64
210-212	-1.24	-7.02	-1.02	-4.57
213-215	-0.33	-2.39	-0.46	-2.66
216-218	-0.31	-1.89	-0.25	-1.49
219-221	-0.29	-1.98	-0.12	-0.71
222-224	-0.46	-3.20	-0.08	-0.46
225-227	-0.25	-1.67	-0.23	-1.25
228-230	-0.29	-2.04	-0.10	-0.61
231-233	-0.18	-1.27	0.03	0.18
234-236	-0.11	-0.76	0.19	1.11
237-239	-0.24	-1.53	0.17	0.96
243-245	-0.29	-1.95	0.13	0.78
246-248	-0.06	-0.39	0.21	1.23
249-251	-0.15	-0.99	0.01	0.06

252-254	0.23	1.57	0.27	1.48
255-257	0.13	0.83	0.23	1.30
258-260	-0.03	-0.19	0.37	2.17
261-263	0.04	0.29	0.26	1.45
264-266	0.13	0.39	-0.09	-0.27
267-269	0.19	0.59	0.01	0.02
270-272	0.12	0.36	0.08	0.23
273-275	-0.03	-0.09	0.13	0.37
276-278	0.15	0.47	-0.11	-0.30
279-281	0.22	0.68	0.12	0.34
282-284	0.01	0.02	0.08	0.23
285-287	0.29	0.88	0.24	0.66
288-290	0.32	0.96	-0.08	-0.22
291-293	0.09	0.28	0.24	0.58
294-296	0.04	0.12	-0.24	-0.63
297-299	-0.24	-0.71	-0.43	-1.13
300-302	-0.15	-0.42	-0.11	-0.28
303-305	-0.02	-0.05	-0.13	-0.33
306-308	0.01	0.02	-0.01	-0.02
309-311	0.20	0.58	0.35	0.94
312-314	0.20	0.57	-0.14	-0.35
315-317	0.18	0.52	-0.59	-1.42
318-320	-0.07	-0.19	0.16	0.42
321-323	-0.04	-0.11	-0.10	-0.25
324-326	-0.11	-0.29	-0.49	-1.12
327-329	0.23	0.62	-0.80	-1.74
330-332	-0.11	-0.29	-0.02	-0.06
333-335	-0.22	-0.48	-0.55	-1.29
336-338	-0.47	-1.11	-0.31	-0.74
339-341	-0.09	-0.17	-0.15	-0.33
342-344	-0.53	-1.23	-0.04	-0.09
345-347	-0.11	-0.26	0.32	0.64
348-350	-0.24	-0.54	-1.38	-2.25
351-353	0.16	0.37	0.03	0.06
354-356	-0.13	-0.29	0.08	0.18
357-359	0.02	0.06	0.58	1.65
360+	-0.59	-3.11	-0.13	-0.58
Interaction of race, ethnicity, and nativity and age interval (180-263 months)				
U.S.-born Black*264-359 months	-0.29	-2.97	-0.40	-2.98
U.S.-born Black*360+ months	-0.52	-1.97	-0.59	-1.56
U.S.-born Mexican American*264-359 months	-0.62	-3.32	-0.28	-1.62
U.S.-born Mexican American*360+ months	-0.98	-1.55	-0.20	-0.41
Foreign-born Mexican*264-359 months	0.38	1.82	-0.49	-3.00
Foreign-born Mexican*360+ months	0.74	1.21	-1.38	-1.34
Intercept				
Intercept	-4.27	-37.14	-5.02	-36.23
Model Fit				
Wald $\chi 2$		4,069		
Person months		765,272		

Notes: Parameter estimates used to predict Figure 1A and 1B. Risk begins at age 15. Data are weighted.

Table A2. Discrete Time Logistic Regression Model Predicting First Pregnancy by Type of First Co-residential Union and Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity

	Pregnancy during Cohabitation		Pregnancy during Marriage	
	β	β/se	β	β/se
Race, ethnicity, and nativity (U.S.-born NH White)				
U.S.-born NH Black	0.32	2.30	-0.90	-2.05
U.S.-born Mexican American	0.61	3.25	-0.01	-0.02
Foreign-born Mexican	1.31	6.59	-0.24	-0.23
Family background at 14 (Two bio/adoptive parents)				
Stepfather, biological mother	-0.17	-0.90	-0.12	-0.71
Single mother	0.05	0.35	-0.26	-1.70
Other	0.04	0.21	-0.33	-1.68
Mother's education (Less than high school)				
High school graduate	-0.24	-1.87	-0.13	-0.92
Some college or more	-0.23	-1.36	-0.21	-1.33
Missing	-0.66	-1.48	-0.26	-0.45
Respondent's own education (High school graduate)				
Less than high school	0.39	2.81	-0.18	-0.96
Some college	-0.54	-3.63	0.04	0.31
College graduate or more	-1.87	-7.28	0.14	1.01
Survey year (2002)				
1995	-0.14	-1.29	-0.12	-1.20
Duration (12 to 14 months)				
<3	0.65	3.20	-0.13	-0.63
3 to 5	0.23	1.03	-0.20	-0.90
6 to 8	-0.21	-0.88	-0.15	-0.62
9 to 11	0.11	0.40	-0.03	-0.13
15 to 17	-0.14	-0.49	-0.24	-0.81
18 to 20	-0.02	-0.09	-0.51	-1.95
21 to 23	-0.28	-0.91	-0.42	-1.42
24+	-0.86	-3.86	-0.96	-5.11
Interaction of race, ethnicity, and nativity and duration (12-23 months)				
U.S.-born Black* <12 months			0.56	1.10
U.S.-born Black* 24+ months			-0.31	-0.54
U.S.-born Mexican American* <12 months			0.40	0.75
U.S.-born Mexican American* 24+ months			-1.12	-1.71
Foreign-born Mexican* <12 months			2.73	2.57
Foreign-born Mexican* 24+ months			0.52	0.42
Intercept				
Intercept	-4.50	-19.82	-4.22	-19.87
Model fit				
Wald $\chi 2$	354		228	
Person months	69,899		95,937	

Notes: Parameter estimates used to predict Figure 2A and 2B. Risk starts at first co-residential union. Data are weighted.

Table A3. Discrete Time Logistic Regression Model Predicting Outcome of First Cohabitation by Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity

	Marriage over Remain in Cohabitation		Dissolution over Remain in Cohabitation	
	β	β/se	β	β/se
Race, ethnicity, and nativity status (U.S.-born NH White)				
U.S.-born NH Black	-0.81	-5.24	0.12	0.81
U.S.-born Mexican American	-0.34	-1.48	-0.29	-0.91
Foreign-born Mexican	-1.93	-3.50	-0.88	-2.06
Family structure at 14 (Two biological parents)				
Stepfather, biological mother	-0.17	-1.65	0.32	2.66
Single mother	-0.24	-3.39	0.11	1.23
Other	-0.21	-2.35	0.19	2.13
Mother's education (Less than high school)				
High school	0.06	0.86	0.15	1.56
Some college or more	0.04	0.52	0.25	2.25
Missing	-0.10	-0.40	-0.02	-0.09
Respondent's own education (High school)				
Less than high school	-0.24	-2.56	-0.18	-1.77
Some college	-0.01	-0.20	-0.02	-0.19
College degree or more	-0.02	-0.22	0.11	1.13
Survey year (2002)				
1995	0.26	4.72	0.13	2.03
Duration (21 to 23)				
Less than 3	0.16	1.07	-0.14	-0.82
3 to 5	0.14	1.34	0.33	2.53
6 to 8	0.05	0.42	0.21	1.52
9 to 11	0.10	0.89	0.40	2.77
12 to 14	0.23	1.46	-0.02	-0.11
15 to 17	-0.04	-0.25	-0.01	-0.03
18 to 20	-0.08	-0.43	0.01	0.06
24 to 26	0.17	1.11	0.06	0.32
27 to 29	0.13	0.87	0.07	0.45
30 to 32	0.20	1.22	0.14	0.78
33 to 35	-0.09	-0.51	-0.19	-0.62
36 or more	-0.14	-0.96	-0.09	-0.53
Race, ethnicity, and nativity * Duration (12-23 months)				
Black*<12 months	0.16	0.84	-0.19	-1.00
Black*24+ months	0.20	1.02	0.07	0.37
U.S.-born Mexican American*<12 months	0.20	0.70	0.10	0.27
U.S.-born Mexican American*24+ months	-0.11	-0.35	0.33	0.88
Foreign-born Mexican*<12 months	2.03	3.47	-0.54	-0.87
Foreign-born Mexican*24+ months	0.76	1.31	0.34	0.62
Intercept				
Intercept	-3.78	-25.64	-4.50	-25.90
Model fit				
Wald $\chi 2$		370		
Person months		107,168		

Notes: Parameter estimates used to predict Figure 3A and 3B. Risk starts at the beginning of first premarital cohabitation. Data are weighted.