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ABSTRACT

The family of origin was once considered an important "third party" in shaping offspring romantic relationships. However, the growing independence of young adults suggests that parents today may have less control over children's union formation. This paper uses data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health to explore how parent-child relationships affect first entry into same-race versus interracial unions. Results suggest that strong relationships with parents during adolescence decrease the risk of entering an interracial first union relative to a same-race first union or no union at all. However, differences with respect to marriage and cohabitation are apparent. Strong intergenerational ties decrease the probability of an interracial first cohabiting union compared to a same-race cohabiting union. Yet, close family relationships increase the chances of a same-race first marriage, but have no bearing on interracial marriage. These findings highlight how families remain racially and ethnically homogeneous over time.

Fifty years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down state laws prohibiting interracial marriage. Although the share of interracially married newlyweds increased from 3% in 1967 to 17% in 2015 (Livingston & Brown, 2017), marriages that cross racial/ethnic boundaries remain relatively uncommon. Yet the data on marriage provide an incomplete portrayal of interracial unions when non-marital cohabitation is not taken into account. Rates of non-marital cohabitation have risen dramatically over the past several decades (Seltzer, 2000; Smock, 2000; Kroeger & Smock, 2014), with cohabitation being the most common type of first union (Kennedy & Bumpass, 2008). Recent estimates suggesting that 60% of women ages 19 to 44 have cohabited at least once in their life (Manning, 2013). Cohabiting couples are heterogeneous and their motivations for living together without marrying are varied. Some couples choose to cohabit before marriage as one way of "testing out" the relationship, whereas others may cohabit in lieu of marriage, either due to personal preferences or financial constraints. Interracial couples may cohabit as a way of signaling their commitment to one another and family members who may otherwise object to marriage (Blackwell & Lichter, 2000). Indeed, recent estimates point to the greater share of interracial couples in non-marital cohabiting unions (18%), compared to those in marriages (10%) (Livingston, 2017; Livingston & Brown, 2017).

Studies that examine why individuals enter into interracial unions often focus on socioeconomic and cultural resources, preferences, and macro-level structural arrangements (Kalmijn, 1998; Qian & Lichter, 2001; Qian & Lichter, 2007). In the United States, parents historically acted as significant "third" parties who influenced whom offspring dated and married (Kalmijn, 1998). Although fundamental changes to the economy, coupled with urbanization, educational expansion, and changing norms have loosened parents' control over children's partner choices (Goode, 1964; Kalmijn, 1998; Rosenfeld & Kim, 2005), contemporary

interviews with Black-White couples (Lewis & Yancey, 1995; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt et al., 1995), Asian Americans (Nemoto, 2009), and Latinos (Vasquez-Tokos, 2017) in the United States all suggest that the family of origin remains an important factor in offspring decisions to enter into committed relationships that cross racial/ethnic lines. However, few studies assess the role that parents play in offspring partner choice from a non-qualitative perspective.

This paper uses a nationally representative sample of young adults in the United States to examine how parent-child relationships during adolescence influence whether young adults choose marital or cohabiting partners outside of their own racial/ethnic group as their first union. Prior studies that examine the link between the family of origin and individuals' romantic relationships often rely on a family resource framework (Axinn & Thornton, 1992; Waite & Spitze, 1981), whereby factors that are known to influence offspring marital behavior, such as family socioeconomic status and family structure, are taken into consideration. No studies have explored how parent-child relationships influence both offspring partner choice (i.e. same-race versus different-race partner) and the types of union (i.e. marriage versus cohabitation) individuals enter together. This paper builds on prior research on interracial union formation by asking how parent-child relationships inhibit or facilitate the formation of children's interracial relationships and as such, has implications for the ways in which families remain ethnically/racially homogenous over time.

BACKGROUND

Racial socialization, parent-child relationships, and partner choice

Parents socialize children – implicitly or explicitly – into their own biases about individuals of different racial and ethnic groups (see Hughes et al., 2006 for a review). This has both indirect and direct consequences for children's perceptions of interracial relationships.

Indirectly, parents may instill offspring with a strong sense of racial or ethnic identity that encourages group belonging (Knight et al., 2011; Umaña-Taylor, et al., 2009). Although seemingly benign, internalization of this "sense of peoplehood" (Gordon, 1964; Kalmijn, 1998; Kalmijn & van Tubergen, 2010) could affect romantic partner preferences. In the United States, second generation immigrants cite parental concerns over cultural and linguistic loss, with parents encouraging children to marry someone of similar national or ethnic origins as one way to retain strong identities across generations (Kibria, 2009; Lee & Bean, 2010).

Indeed, much of the research on dating relationships finds that adolescents who report close family ties are less likely to date partners of different racial backgrounds. Specifically, adolescents who report strong maternal warmth and support are less likely to interracially date compared to those with weaker ties to mothers (Wang et al., 2006). Communication also matters: those who more frequently talk to parents, both in general and more specifically about dates or parties, are also less likely to report being in interracial dating relationships (Huijnk and Liefbroer, 2012; Wang et al., 2006).

More directly, parents may explicitly state their preference for or against interracial partners. At the population level, attitudinal data about the acceptability of interracial marriage varies dramatically by age. Recent poll studies find that 63% of Americans say they would be fine if a family member married someone of a different race/ethnicity, but older adults express much more conservative views about interracial marriage compared to younger individuals (Wang, 2012). For example, only a little over a third (38%) of adults age 65 and older said they would be fine if a family member married someone of a different race/ethnicity, compared to 55% of those aged 50 to 64, and 85% of those aged 18 to 29. For young adults coming of age

today, it is likely that substantial attitudinal differences towards interracial marriage exist across generations within their own families.

Some parents may openly prohibit children from forming interracial romantic relationships based on their own prejudices. For example, parents who voice strong opinions against the race of potential partners may actively police children's dating lives (Park, Vo & Tsung, 2009; Shenhav et al., 2016; Zhou and Bankston, 1998). Interview data suggest that whereas some offspring may have dated interracially in the past, parents are involved in preventing the progression of these dating relationships, or in the development of future relationships with members of specific racial or ethnic groups (Vasquez-Tokos, 2017). Parents may also issue sanctions that dissuade interracial romance. In-depth interviews with African American and White college students, for instance, underscore how a main deterrent to initiating relationships that cross racial/ethnic boundaries is fear of being rejected by parents (Harris and Kalbfleish, 2000). Fear of parents' disapproval may be one reason why adolescents who date across racial/ethnic lines meet their partner's parents less frequently than those with same-race partners (Vaquera and Kao, 2005).

Parents may also reify existing racial hierarchies by framing partners from certain racial/ethnic groups as more acceptable than others. Recent poll data find that the acceptance of a hypothetical interracial partner into one's own family varies sharply by the partner's race: 81% of non-Whites said they were "fine with" a member of their family marrying someone who was White; whereas only 66% of non-Blacks said that they would accept someone who is Black into their family (Wang, 2012). Qualitative data also consistently point to anti-black bias in potential partners. The systemic racism against Blacks as romantic partners has long been noted among Whites, with anti-miscegenation laws that outlawed Black-White intermarriage reaching back to

colonial America. Recent research, however, also reveals racism among Hispanic and Asian families as well. In Los Angeles, interviews with Hispanic youth reveal strong anti-black sentiments from parents, especially through disapproval of Black-Latino couples and children born from Black-Latino unions (Morales, 2012). Anti-black discrimination is also voiced in interviews with second-generation Asian immigrants, where one woman's father warned her about marrying someone from a different "culture," but was blunt in his objections to interracial marriages, which he defined as marriage with Blacks (Lee & Bean, 2010, p. 92).

On the other hand, parents may also socialize children into social norms that encourage interracial unions. In interviews with Whites in Black-White couples, Whites often noted a familial openness to diversity and parents who encouraged a racially tolerant perspective as decisive factors that enabled their own interracial relationships (Root, 2001: 96-97). Some scholars, however, have noted how "Espousing multiculturalism is a privilege of whiteness" (Vasquez-Tokos, 2017, pp. 56) because it can only be done from a position that is insulated from racism.

Apart from socialization, parents may also shape whom offspring marry by acting as a point of reference for or against specific racial groups. In her interview with Latina women, Vasquez-Tokos (2017) notes how negative experiences with oppressive, patriarchal fathers, "color-coded" (Root, 2001) daughters' experiences by generalizing the experience to all Latino men. These women out-marry to avoid what they believed to be potentially problematic relationships with Latino husbands in the future. Similarly, poor relationships with family members or feelings of alienation from the family are common reasons why individuals in Black-White couples cite fewer obstacles to intermarriage (Rosenblatt et al., 1995). A lack of familial concern is emphasized in findings from a small survey where those in interracial

marriages rank parental approval of their romantic relationships much lower on a list of attributes that are important to their relationship compared to those in same-race marriages (Gurung & Duong, 1999).

Finally, children who are emotionally close to parents may choose to remain nearby, even after they leave home. Research highlights the important role of kin in deterring family members from moving out of the neighborhood (Dawkins, 2006; Kan, 2007). This is because family members – and parents in particular, provide a critical source of emotional, financial and instrumental support to offspring, and act a safety net in the event of unexpected events or life course transitions (Seltzer & Bianchi, 2013). Given substantial neighborhood segregation across racial and ethnic lines (Charles, 2003; Massey & Denton, 1993; Quillian, 2012), children who remain geographically proximate to parents may limit their own exposure to different-race partners.

These findings highlight the importance of considering the ways in which parents and parent-child relationships influence whether offspring enter into interracial unions. It is possible, based on prior research, that close ties between parents and children during adolescence deter children from forming interracial unions. In a similar way, weak ties to parents may also indicate a sense of indifference or rebellion that enables relationships with different-race partners.

Intergenerational ties, cohabitation, and marriage

The strength of intergenerational relationships may also be indicative of the type of union offspring enter into, although the data in this regard remain inconclusive. Whereas an early study found that cohabitors tend to report poorer relationships with their parents than those who are married (Nock, 1995), it failed to disentangle whether these intergenerational ties were weak prior to cohabitation. Conversely, more recent analyses confirm that weak ties to parents during

adolescence are linked to offspring early entry into cohabiting relationships (i.e., before age 20), compared to not entering into any coresidential union (Ryan et al., 2009). A similar study found that those who report low levels of family belonging during adolescence are subsequently less likely to marry, but conversely more likely to enter into a cohabiting union in their early 20s (Thorsen, 2017). However, the effect of family belonging tends to wane as children grew older: by the time young adults reach their late 20s to early 30s, there are no longer any differences in union formation behavior between those who report strong versus weak family ties during adolescence. These findings echo those from an older study of less diverse families from 1960s Detroit (Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007), where close intergenerational relationships during adolescence were not predictive of the type of union individuals entered (Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2007; pg. 260).

The study presented here focuses on first union formation among young adults. As such, it is important to consider the timing of when these relationships occur. Previous research documents a link between earlier intergenerational relationships and the timing of union formation. In the sample of 1960s Detroit, offspring who enjoyed spending time with parents, and who received affection from and confided in parents, tended to enter unions earlier than those who reported emotionally distant relationships to parents (Thornton, Axinn, & Xie, 2007: pg. 260). The inverse is also true: low levels of family belonging tend to delay entry into both marital and cohabiting unions during young adulthood (Thorsen, 2017). Strong emotional ties to the family could indicate a greater orientation towards family more broadly – which in turn increases the probability of an earlier, rather than later entry into a romantic relationship. In addition, good parent-child relationships may have spillover effects that lead to better

interpersonal skills and enable the development of stable intimate relationships in early adulthood.

Other sociodemographic correlates of partner choice and union formation

Several demographic characteristics – including race, ethnicity and nativity - also correlate with partner choice and union formation behavior. Racial and ethnic minorities, for example, are more likely to enter into interracial unions than Whites in part because Whites have a larger pool of same-race partners to choose from (Kalmijn, 1998). Racial and ethnic differences in lifetime exposure to cohabitation are narrowing (Manning, 2013), but Blacks remain less likely to marry than Whites (Cohen, 2015). First and second generation children of immigrants are more likely to intermarry than their third-generation counterparts, but this too varies by racial and ethnic background (Kalmijn & van Tubergen, 2010). However, second generation immigrants are less likely to marry and more likely to delay marriage than their third-generation peers (Brown, Van Hook, & Glick, 2008). First and second generation immigrants are also less likely than those with native-born parents to cohabit (Brown, Van Hook, & Glick, 2008).

Education and family socioeconomic resources may also play an important role in whom offspring marry. Previous research highlights a strong educational gradient in the likelihood of intermarriage (Kalmijn, 1998; King and Bratter, 2007; Qian and Lichter, 2007). Highly educated individuals tend to be less prejudiced, possess more positive attitudes about diversity, be more tolerant of immigration, and work in more diverse work settings (Kalmijn, 2012). These factors suggest that highly-educated individuals, or those with highly-educated parents, may not only be more open to the idea of intermarriage (Wang. 2012), but may also be more exposed to individuals of racial backgrounds who differ from their own. However, far less is known about how differences in family structure – for example, growing up in two-parent biological

households or single parent households - influence entry into intermarriage. Non-traditional family environments may allow for greater autonomy when choosing a partner if children feel less compelled to comply with strictly held norms about family.

Well-known from previous work is that family socioeconomic status and structure is strongly tied to whether one enters into a cohabiting or marital union. Higher levels of parental education tend to delay offspring marriage (Waite and Spitze, 1981), possibly because highly educated parents convey greater aspirations for the amount of education their children receive before marrying (Axinn and Thornton, 1992; Thornton, Axinn and Xie, 2007). Highly educated parents may indirectly decrease the likelihood of entering into a cohabiting union, rather than marriage, because parents with more education have more income, which itself has a negative effect on cohabitation (Thornton, Axinn and Xie, 2007: 138-139). Family structure also shapes union formation behavior (Ryan et al., 2008). Prior studies find that children raised in two-parent biological households tend to delay marriage (Waite and Spitze, 1981), whereas those with parents who divorced and remarried tend to marry earlier (Axinn and Thornton, 1992). Individuals raised in families where mothers had experienced divorce or widowhood are also more likely to cohabit before (or in lieu of) marriage rather than marry directly (Thornton, Axinn and Xie, 2007). Combined, these studies highlight a possible intergenerational transmission of union-formation behavior: those with parents in "non-traditional" unions may choose less traditional relationships themselves (Ryan et al., 2008).

RESEARCH AIMS

This paper extends prior research that links family ties and family background to union formation outcomes by asking whether the family of origin also plays a role in shaping offspring partner choice (Axinn and Thornton, 1992; Waite & Spitze, 1981). Previous research on this

topic – through qualitative interviews with young adults and interracial couples – cites the importance of intergenerational ties in shaping whom offspring bring home as romantic partners (Lewis & Yancey, 1995; Nemoto, 2009; Root, 2001; Rosenblatt et al., 1995; Vasquez-Tokos, 2017). However, less is known about whether this remains broadly true of today's young adults, many of whom have greater freedom and leeway surrounding their choice of partners (Rosenfeld and Kim, 2005) and whether they cohabit with or marry that partner.

In the current study, we ask whether parent-child relationships during adolescence shape offspring decisions to enter into an interracial first union versus same-race first union. Based on prior research, as well as generational differences in the acceptance of intermarriage, we predict that strong intergenerational ties will be positively associated with first entry into same-race unions, but negatively correlated with interracial unions. Second, we expand our initial research question by categorizing first unions not only by partner race, but also by type of union—i.e. cohabitation or marriage. We anticipate that strong parent – child relationships will increase the risk of same-race marriage, but not interracial marriage. Furthermore, we predict stronger intergenerational ties to be negatively linked to first cohabitation, but more so for those with different-race partners than cohabitation with same-race partners.

DATA AND METHODS

Data

This project uses data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health), a nationally representative study of U.S. adolescents in grades 7-12 in the United States during the 1994-95 school year. In 1994/5, the average respondent was aged 16. The Add Health cohort was followed into young adulthood with three additional in-home interviews in 1996, 2002 and most recently in 2008/9, when the average respondent was 29 years

old. Add Health combines longitudinal survey data on respondents' social, economic, psychological and physical well-being with contextual data on parents, families, and romantic relationships. In this way, the data provide a unique opportunity to track individuals during and following adolescence, a critical period in the life course. Crucial for this study is that a complete roster of all marital and cohabiting relationships was collected at Waves 4 when the race/ethnicity of each partner was also asked.

This paper uses data from respondents who were interviewed at Wave 1 and Wave 4 and our analytic sample is drawn from those 14,800 respondents interviewed in Wave 4 with valid sampling weights. After first omitting individuals with no residential parents/parental figures at Wave 1, our analytic sample was reduced to 14,528. We then dropped multiracial respondents and those in racial/ethnic groups too small to analyze (Native American, other), which reduced our sample to 13,794.[1] We omit those with no romantic relationship history at Wave 4 (n=188) and further exclude respondents missing values on one or more predictor variables (n=90), bringing our analytic sample to 13,516 respondents. Finally, we omitted individuals who either entered their first union or left the study prior to or at age 16 (the age of consent in most states), bringing our final analytic sample to 13,229 respondents.

Measures

We consider two outcome measures related to first coresidential union formation. Our first measure differentiates between individuals who have not entered into any coresidential union, those who have entered into a same-race first union, and those who have entered into a different-race first union by Wave 4. Our second outcome measure is an expansion of the first

[1] We exclude multiracial individuals because of the conceptual difficulty of determining whether they are in same-race or different-race unions. However, in supplemental analyses we include multiracial respondents who provide the race/ethnicity they most closely identify with and classify their unions accordingly. The inclusion of these respondents and their unions do no alter our substantive results.

measure, but differentiates between those who entered no union, a same-race *marital* first union, an interracial *marital* first union, a same-race *cohabiting* first union, and an interracial *cohabiting* first union by Wave 4. Individuals who enter into a same-race relationship are defined as those who partner within the broad racial categories of non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic Asian, and Hispanic. Although we understand Hispanics to be an ethnic, and not a racial group, we refer to intermarriage with Hispanics as interracial given that Hispanics are frequently treated as a racial group (See Vasquez-Tokos, 2017, pp. 28-29 for a review).

We combine the following seven measures of the respondent's relationships with their parents at Wave 1, each of which are based on 5-point Likert scales: (1) the respondent thinks their family understands them, (2) the respondent thinks the family has fun together, (3) the respondent thinks their family pays attention to them, (4) the respondent wants to run away from home (reverse coded), (5) how close the respondent feels to parents, (6) whether or not the respondent's parents are warm and loving, and (7) whether the respondent thinks that her/his parents care about the respondent. This measure ranges from 4 to 35, with a mean of 28.37 in our sample. In separate analyses not shown here, we conducted a factor analysis to determine whether the items could indeed be combined. We found that the items loaded onto one factor with an alpha of .81, indicating strong correlation across the measures.

Respondents are categorized into four broad racial categories: non-Hispanic White, Black, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Hispanic (of any race). We use measures of race taken from in the "in-home" questionnaire, although many of the students also completed race measures in an "at-school" questionnaire. Previous research that matched students' responses found inconsistent racial identities for approximately 12% of the respondents (Harris and Sim, 2002, pg. 619). The largest category consisted of students who reported being multiracial at

school, but monoracial at home (5%). In this study, we consider the respondent's racial categories as fixed, but realize that adolescents may in fact think of their own racial/ethnic identity in more fluid terms. Respondent's immigrant status is assigned to two categories: 1) foreign-born respondents and native-born respondents with at least one foreign-born parent are categorized as children of immigrants, 2) native-born individuals with both native-born parents are classified as children of natives.

In addition, we control for age and gender at Wave 1. Age is recorded in years and gender is measured dichotomously, with female respondents receiving a score of one, and male respondents receiving a score of zero. Family structure and parents' highest education are included. Family structure is measured using a three-category variable differentiating between respondents who lived in two-parent biological households, two-parent step-family households, or single-parent households at Wave 1. For two-parent households, parents' educational attainment is measured as the greater of each parent's level of education.[2]

Method

To address our research questions, we use discrete-time multinomial logistic regression models to assess first coresidential union formation as a set of competing risks. For our initial analysis, individuals who enter their first union can either do so with a same-race or different-race partner. The base category includes those who do not enter into a coresidential union by Wave 4. For our second analysis, individuals enter a marital union with a same-race partner, a marital union with a different-race partner, a cohabiting union with a same-race partner, or a cohabiting union with a different-race partner. We control for the duration dependence of hazard

[2]Family income, also an important measure of family resources, was not asked of respondents although parents were asked about family income in the parental questionnaire. Because only 85% of children had a parent who completed the questionnaire, this measure is not included given further restrictions necessary to the analytical sample.

of first union entry by including both a linear and a quadratic term for age in years. Respondents enter the risk set at age 16, the age of consent for marriage in most U.S. states.

In each analysis, we examine two models. The first model includes the summary measure of parent-child relationships and the duration dependence (i.e. age and age squared). The second model incorporates all controls, including race, immigrant status, gender, parents' socioeconomic status, and family structure at Wave 1. In preliminary analyses not presented here, we also tested for the moderating effects of race, immigrant status, and gender. We found almost no evidence that the relationship between close intergenerational ties and union outcomes/partner type varied across racial/ethnic groups, nativity status, or gender. All models are estimated in Stata 15, and make use of the svy prefix to adjust for survey design effects of Add Health.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents descriptive characteristics of the analytical sample. The sample is divided into three categories: respondents who had not yet entered a coresidential union by Wave 4, those who had entered a same-race union as their first union, and young adults who had entered an interracial first union by Wave 4. When testing for differences across groups, we find that respondents who had not yet entered into a coresidential union have the strongest relationship with parents (28.81), followed by those in same-race unions (28.30), and those in different-race unions (27.86). Differences between all groups are statistically significant.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

In accordance to previously established patterns of racial/ethnic differences in intermarriage, we find that among those in same-race first unions, non-Hispanic Whites make up the majority (76%), whereas they make up a much smaller share of those in different-race unions (53%) ($p<.05$). Contrasting this are Hispanics (of all races); whereby Hispanics make up 8% of

all same-race first unions but 29% of all interracial first marital and cohabiting unions ($p<.05$). A similar variation is found for Asians, although the difference is much smaller and not statistically significant ($p>.05$). With respect to nativity, the children of immigrants make up a greater share of those in interracial first unions (22%), compared to their share in same-race unions (12%) ($p<.05$). We also find differences across first union type by family structure and parents' education. As hypothesized, a greater proportion of respondents in interracial first unions were raised in single-parent households (32%) versus those in same-race first unions (28%) ($p<.05$).

Parent-child relationships and offspring entry into same-race or interracial unions

Table 2 presents results from the discrete-time competing risks model predicting entry into a same-race first union or interracial first union, relative to forming no union by Wave 4. The results show that parent-child relationships are a significant correlate of entry into any union. Regardless of union type (i.e. same-race or interracial), those with stronger intergenerational ties are more likely to remain single and less likely to enter into any coresidential union. Model 2 adds in controls to the model and the effect of parent-child relationships is no longer statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level for entry into same-race unions, but remains significantly linked to lower risk of interracial first unions ($p<.001$). Furthermore, tests for differences between the coefficients for same-race versus different-race unions indicate that the coefficients are significantly different from one another. Respondents with stronger parent-child relationships during adolescence are less likely to enter into interracial unions than same-race unions (rrr=.978; $p<.01$).

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Relative risk ratios for the control variables demonstrate clear racial differences in first union type. Not surprisingly, non-Whites all experience a lower risk of entering into a same-race

first union compared to Whites (p<.001). Conversely, Hispanics experience a four times greater risk (p<.001) of entering an interracial first union than Whites, and Asians experience double the risk (p<.01) of entering an interracial first union compared to Whites. Results for family structure also suggest that growing up in 'non-traditional households', which include stepfamilies and single parent households, increases the risk of entering into any union, compared to remaining single. Not shown here are results from additional tests which confirmed that those raised in single-parent households are more likely to enter into an interracial first union than a same-race union (rrr=1.18; p<.05). In addition, the results note significant variation by parents' education. Compared to offspring whose parents received a high school education or less, those whose parents completed some college or a college degree are significantly less likely to enter a same-race union versus remain single, but do not significantly differ in their likelihood of forming an interracial union versus remaining single. We unpack the results further (in results not shown here) and find that offspring with highly-educated parents are more likely to enter into an interracial union than a same-race union (p<.001).

Parent-child relationships and offspring entry into same-race or interracial cohabiting versus marital unions

When we further disaggregate our outcome measure to consider not only race of first partner but also the type of first union (cohabiting versus marital), a more nuanced pattern emerges. Table 3 presents the results. In Model 1 we see that stronger parent-child relationships are significantly associated with a *greater* risk of entering into a same-race marriage compared to not entering a union at all (p<.01). Yet, stronger intergenerational ties remain linked to a lower risk of entering into any type of cohabiting relationship compared to remaining single.

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Control variables are added in Model 2, but we find that the results for parent-child relationships remain substantively the same. Strong intergenerational ties are still associated with an increased risk of same-race first marriage ($p<.01$), but a decreased risk of same-race first cohabitation (rrr=.98, $p<.001$) and interracial first cohabitation ($p<.001$), compared to not entering into any relationship at all. Race/ethnicity and nativity status are also predictors of union and partner type. Echoing earlier results from Table 2, non-White respondents are less likely than Whites to enter into a same-race marriage, or enter into a same-race cohabiting partnership, compared to remaining single. Yet Hispanics and Asians are also more likely to enter an interracial first union (marriage or cohabitation) than Whites, rather than entering no union at all. Results from supplemental tests not shown here also suggest that Hispanic and Asian respondents are more likely than White respondents to interracially marry, rather than marry partners of the same race ($p<.001$), with similar results for interracial versus same-race cohabitation ($p<.001$).

Again, results for family structure and parents' education mirror those presented in Table 2. Children raised in 'non-traditional' households are more likely than those raised in two-parent biological families to enter into a first cohabiting union (regardless of partner race) than remaining single. In addition, parental education remains a robust predictor of union type and partner choice: children with college-educated parents are less likely to cohabit or marry same-race partners than those whose parents did not complete college, compared to remaining single. In fact, children with parents who completed some college are more likely to enter into interracial unions than remain single compared to offspring whose parents have less education. When comparing across marriage types, additional tests (not shown) suggest that children with better educated parents are more likely to intermarry, versus marry same-race partners; and

children with well-educated parents are also more likely to cohabit with partners of a different race than to cohabit with partners of the same race.

Finally, we conducted supplemental tests to assess whether the parent-child relationship coefficients in Table 3 (model 2) significantly differ for 1) interracial cohabiting unions versus same-race cohabiting unions and 2) interracial marriages versus same-race marriages. The results (presented in Appendix A1) suggest that closer ties to the family of origin mark a distinction between entering into interracial versus same-race *cohabiting unions*: those who reported stronger ties to parents are less likely to cohabit with different-race partners than cohabit with same-race partners ($b = -.02$, $p<.05$). However, the strength of intergenerational ties does not affect partner race among those who marry ($b = -.02$, $p>.05$). The results also show that for those entering either interracial or same-race first unions, stronger ties to parents are associated with entering into marital first unions over cohabiting first unions ($b = .03$, $p<.05$).

To better interpret our results, Figure 1 illustrates the predicted probability of entering into different unions by strength of parent-child relationships. Across the spectrum of intergenerational ties, young adults are most likely to enter a same-race cohabitation and least likely to enter an interracial marriage as their first union type. However, we notice slight differences when comparing those with the weakest ties to parents (first quartile) and those with the strongest ties to parents (fourth quartile). For those with weak intergenerational ties, the odds of entering into a same-race first marriage and interracial cohabitation are the same. However, for those with the strongest ties to parents, we see an increased probability of same-race marriage, but a decreased probability of interracial cohabitation as first union type. Among those with the strongest ties to parents, offspring entry into first union type follows a clear pattern: same-race unions are preferable, with cohabitation first and marriage second, followed by

interracial unions, again with cohabitation first and marriage second. Apart from estimates for interracial first marriage, the estimates for the first and fourth quartiles significantly differ for each union type. These patterns highlight the correlation between close parent-child relationships and children's union formation behaviors.

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

DISCUSSION

Although U.S. trend data suggest that attitudes towards intermarriage have become more liberal over time (Wang, 2012), deterrents to interracial relationships continue to exist. Our results indicate that one way in which the family of origin hinders the formation of offspring interracial relationships is through the ties to children themselves. In our first analysis, we found that although strong intergenerational ties are linked to a lower risk of forming any coresidential first union (interracial or same-race) compared to remaining single, the likelihood of entering an *interracial* first union is lower than forming a *same-race* first union when ties to the family of origin are strong. The results speak to many ways in which close ties may prevent interracial unions. Implicitly, children with close ties to parents may have a stronger sense of racial or ethnic identification (Knight et al., 2011; Umaña-Taylor, et al., 2009), which in turn could lead some offspring to prefer same-race partners. Strong ties between generations may inhibit children's geographic mobility which also limits their pool of potential interracial partners given the long history of racial and ethnic segregation in the United States (Dawkins, 2006; Kan, 2007). More insidiously, parents may also pass on racial prejudice to offspring and disapprove of interracial unions. Although public opposition to interracial unions has declined over the past half century, generational differences continue to exist such that older adults remain more likely to object to interracial marriage involving their own family members than young adults (Wang,

2012). Young adults with strong intergenerational ties may not wish to upset parents and thus may avoid different-race romantic partners, even if they themselves are not opposed to interracial unions.

Next, we assessed whether our results were robust once we also consider the type of first union young adults enter into today – cohabitation and marriage. Once we distinguish between union types, the findings are more nuanced: strong parent-child relationships encourage entry into same-race marriage, but deter cohabitation (same-race or interracial), compared to remaining single. These results partially confirm our prediction that strong parent-child ties would encourage marriage (but only same-race marriage) and deter cohabitation. They also parallel previous studies that use a similar sample of diverse young adults and find that weaker ties to parents increase the odds of cohabiting, but decrease the likelihood of marriage, rather than remaining un-partnered (Thorsen, 2017).

Whereas previous work tends to suggest that closer parent-child ties during adolescence prevent early cohabitation (Ryan et al., 2008) and lead children to marry, rather than to cohabit as young adults (Thorsen, 2017), our work finds that this narrative is incomplete unless we also examine whether the union involves partners of a different race. In this study, we conducted supplemental tests and found that although there is no significant difference in the strength of intergenerational ties for those who *marry* same-race versus different-race partners, closer intergenerational relationships act as a significant deterrent to entering interracial *cohabiting* unions, compared to same-race cohabiting unions. But why are ties to parents more meaningful in distinguishing between partner type for entry into cohabitation compared to marriage? We suggest that these differences may be based on broader patterns of selection into marriage versus cohabitation. Recent estimates clearly illustrate how cohabitation has surpassed marriage as the

most common first union type (Kennedy & Bumpass, 2008), a fact which is also illustrated in our graph of predicted probabilities. However, because cohabiting unions are less formal than marriage, and because those who enter cohabiting unions tend to show less relationship commitment than those who marry (Brown & Booth, 1996; Nock, 1995), parents with stronger ties to children may have a greater say in partner choice among those offspring who choose to cohabit. Conversely, those who select into marriage as their first coresidential union are rare, and intermarriage remains even less common. Children with stronger ties to parents as adolescents may select into marriage because they are more family-oriented than others, but because interracial marriage is so rare, this only affects entry into same-race cohabiting unions. Combined, these results add greater complexity to prior research that links stronger parent-child ties to children's union formation behavior.

While illuminating, findings from this paper are far from conclusive. The study presents certain limitations that also shed light on areas in need of further research. First, the analyses conducted here do not include information on partners' education. Prior research shows that in the United States, the expansion of racial/ethnic intermarriage is correlated with the increasing educational attainment of ethnic minorities (Qian & Lichter, 2011). Our results hint at this, given that in the sample used here, children of parents with a college education are more likely to enter into interracial relationships rather than same-race relationships compared to offspring whose parents did not complete college. Unfortunately, Add Health did not collect information on the educational attainment of partners for respondents interviewed at Wave 4. Family relationships may have a significant effect on the race/ethnicity of the respondent's partner, but may have an even greater influence on the socioeconomic background of that partner. Children with strong ties to their families may want to meet family expectations of partnering with someone from a

similar class background, a trait that may be far more important than a partner's race or ethnicity. Second, we do not have information on the partner's relationship to his/her family. It is clear that those relationships will also influence the timing and type of union individuals enter. Third, our analyses focus on how intergenerational ties shape offspring entry into first unions only. Although the young average age of our sample partially justifies this focus given that most young adults in the Add Health data have not had more than one coresidential relationship (authors' own calculations based on the data) by Wave 4, it is possible that our findings may change if all co-residential relationships are considered. Namely, parents may not have such a strong influence on subsequent union types given the importance of prior relationships in determining future partners. Fourth, due to sample size constraints, we are not able to assess how parent-child relationships influence the entry into specific interracial unions (Black-White, Asian-White, Hispanic-White, etc.). Although research clearly shows racial hierarchies in choosing partners, future data collection that encompasses a larger sample of interracial marital and cohabiting partners, as well as ties to their parents, will enable this type of study. Finally, although our work points to the importance of parent-child ties in children's first union formation, pinpointing the exact mechanism by which this occurs is difficult, if not impossible, using survey data. Parents' efforts may be intentional; some parents may simply prefer their offspring to marry or partner within the racial/ethnic group, and children, especially those who have good relationships with parents, may be eager to comply with family preferences. However, the process may also take place in less obvious ways. Strong ties to families could encourage offspring to find partners who are easily integrated – at least superficially - into the kin network. Strong family ties may also limit the pool of available partners by preventing children from moving away. We see a strong need for further qualitative work on this issue, and not only for

those already in cohabiting or marital unions, but rather for those individuals who have yet to make any family transitions.

Despite these limitations, this study provides empirical evidence that intergenerational relationships have a significant influence on individuals' family formation behaviors and calls into question recent research that cites the waning influence of parents on romantic relationships (Rosenfeld and Kim, 2005). Findings point to the importance of understanding how parent-child ties are part of a broader arsenal of family resources that influence young adults' relationship decisions. Finally, the results from our study should also be framed in the context of rapidly increasing ethnic and racial diversity in the United States. Strong family ties, which have multiple positive consequences for young adult outcomes, may lead to greater racial and ethnic stratification when children with close ties to the family of origin choose to marry and cohabit within racial and ethnic boundaries.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics, by First Partner Race (Sample N = 13,229; Population N= 15,678,020)

	No Unions		Same-Race First Union		Interracial First Union		Wald tests[1]
	Mean[2]	se	Mean	se	Mean	se	
W1 Positive Parent-Child Relationship	28.81	0.18	28.35	0.12	27.88	0.17	a, b, c
W1 Age	15.06	0.14	15.52	0.12	15.33	0.13	a, b, c
Female	0.44	0.02	0.52	0.01	0.52	0.02	a, b
Race/Ethnicity							
Non-Hispanic White	0.63	0.04	0.76	0.03	0.53	0.02	a, b, c
Black	0.20	0.03	0.14	0.02	0.13	0.01	a, b
Hispanic	0.12	0.02	0.08	0.02	0.29	0.02	a, b, c
Asian	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.05	0.01	a, c
Child of Immigrants	0.17	0.02	0.12	0.02	0.22	0.02	a, b, c
W1 Family Structure							
2-Parent Bio/Adoptive HH	0.64	0.02	0.57	0.01	0.55	0.02	a, b
2-Parent Stepfamily HH	0.10	0.01	0.15	0.01	0.13	0.01	a, b
Single Parent HH	0.26	0.02	0.28	0.01	0.32	0.02	b, c
W1 Parent Education							
High-School or Less	0.35	0.02	0.46	0.02	0.43	0.02	a, b
Some College	0.20	0.01	0.23	0.01	0.24	0.02	a, b
College Degree	0.45	0.02	0.31	0.02	0.33	0.02	a, b
N	2,324		8,975		1,930		

Notes: [1]Significant differences from wald-tests at p<.05 level are reported: a= significant difference between those with no unions and those with same-race first unions; b = significant difference between those with no unions and those with different-race first unions; c= significant difference between those with same-race first unions and different-race first unions. [2]Means were calculated using the svy prefix in Stata 15 to account for survey design effects.

Table 2. Discrete-Time Competing Risks Regression of First Partner Race on Parent-Child Relationship and Covariates (Base: No First Union)

	Model 1						Model 2					
	Same-Race Union			Interracial Union			Same-Race Union			Interracial Union		
	RRR		se	RRR		se	RRR		se	RRR		se
Parent-Child Relationship Scale	0.99	**	0.00	0.97	***	0.01	0.99	+	0.00	0.97	***	0.01
Age	3.36	***	0.20	3.70	***	0.44	3.61	***	0.22	3.90	***	0.47
Age^2	0.97	***	0.00	0.97	***	0.00	0.97	***	0.00	0.97	***	0.00
Female							1.42	***	0.05	1.40	***	0.10
Race/Ethnicity[a]												
Black							0.58	***	0.04	0.81		0.11
Hispanic							0.48	***	0.04	4.00	***	0.54
Asian							0.43	***	0.07	2.23	**	0.57
Child of Immigrant							0.99		0.06	0.76		0.14
W1 Family Structure[b]												
2-Parent Stepfamily HH							1.44	***	0.08	1.29	**	0.12
Single Parent HH							1.19	***	0.04	1.41	***	0.10
W1 Parent Education[c]												
Some College							0.82	***	0.04	1.20	+	0.12
College Degree							0.59	***	0.02	0.92		0.07
Constant	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	***	0.00

p<.001***; p<.01**; p<.05*; p<.10+

Notes: [a]Non-Hispanic White = reference group; [b]2-Parent Biological/Adopted HH = reference group; [c]Parent has High School Education or Less = reference group. Sample N = 13,229; Population N= 15,678,020

Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health)

Table 3. Discrete-Time Competing Risks Regression of First Partner Race and Union Type on Parent-Child Relationship and Covariates

	Model 1											
	Same-Race Marriage			Interracial Marriage			Same-Race Cohabitation			Interracial Cohabitation		
	RRR		se	RRR		se	RRR		se	RRR		se
Parent-Child Relationship Scale	1.02	**	0.01	1.00		0.02	0.98	***	0.00	0.96	***	0.01
Age	4.52	***	0.45	4.52	***	1.39	3.15	***	0.21	3.66	***	0.46
Age^2	0.97	***	0.00	0.97	***	0.01	0.98	***	0.00	0.97	***	0.00
Female												
Race/Ethnicity[a]												
Black												
Hispanic												
Asian												
Child of Immigrant												
W1 Family Structure[b]												
2-Parent Stepfamily HH												
Single Parent HH												
W1 Parent Education[c]												
Some College												
College Degree												
Constant	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	***	0.00

p<.001***; p<.01**; p<.05*; p<.10+

Notes: [a]Non-Hispanic White = reference group; [b]2-Parent Biological/Adopted HH = reference group; [c]Parent has High School Education or Less = reference group. Sample N = 13,229; Population N= 15,678,020

Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health)

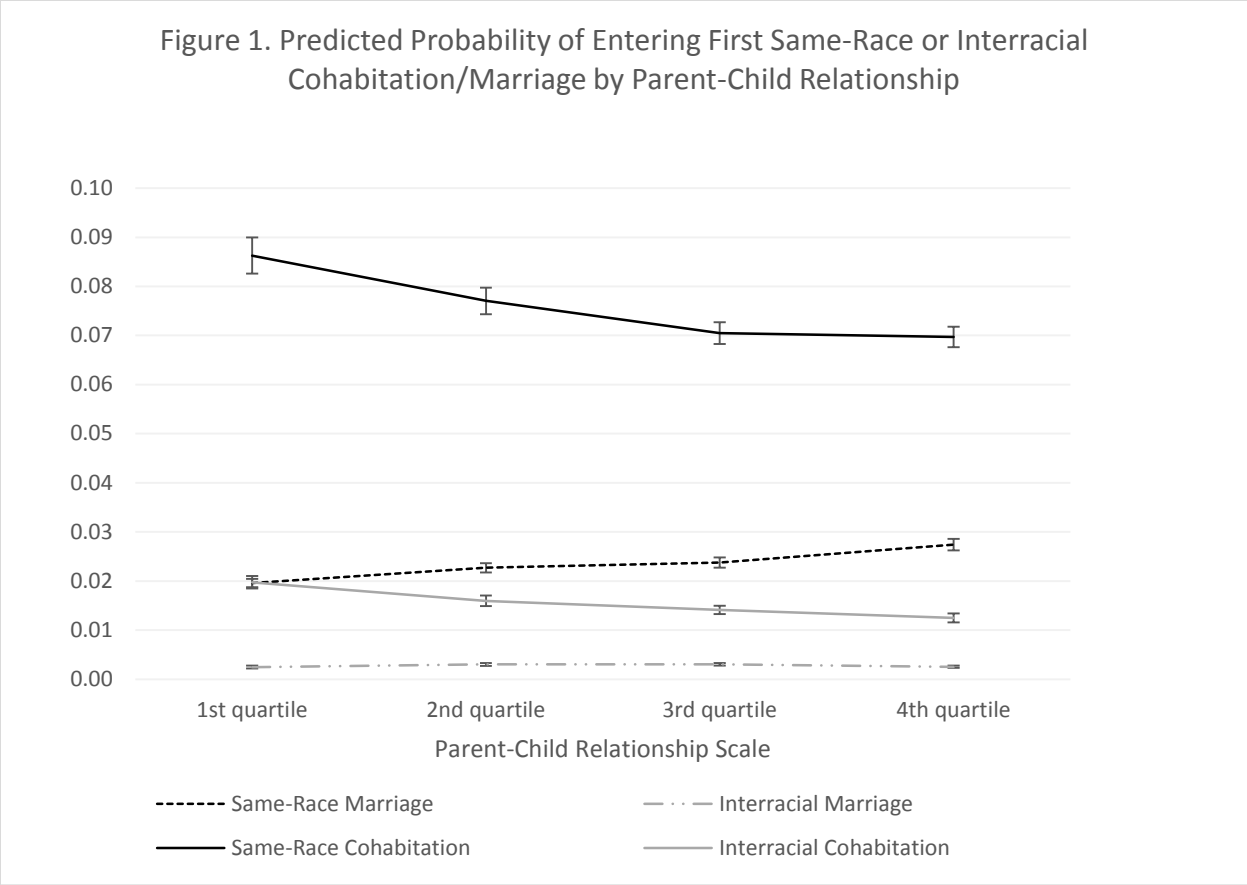
Table 3. Discrete-Time Competing Risks Regression of First Partner Race and Union Type on Parent-Child Relationship and Covariates

	Model 2											
	Same-Race Marriage			Interracial Marriage			Same-Race Cohabitation			Interracial Cohabitation		
	RRR		se	RRR		se	RRR		se	RRR		se
Parent-Child Relationship Scale	1.02	**	0.01	1.00		0.02	0.98	***	0.00	0.97	***	0.01
Age	4.80	***	0.47	4.60	***	1.42	3.38	***	0.23	3.88	***	0.49
Age^2	0.97	***	0.00	0.97	***	0.01	0.97	***	0.00	0.97	***	0.00
Female	1.79	***	0.13	1.20		0.19	1.32	***	0.05	1.44	***	0.11
Race/Ethnicity[a]												
Black	0.33	***	0.04	1.47		0.46	0.66	***	0.05	0.73	*	0.10
Hispanic	0.63	**	0.10	5.84	***	1.90	0.42	***	0.04	3.74	***	0.51
Asian	0.59	*	0.13	3.78	**	1.61	0.36	***	0.10	2.00	*	0.56
Child of Immigrant	1.34	**	0.14	0.76		0.25	0.87	+	0.06	0.76		0.14
W1 Family Structure[b]												
2-Parent Stepfamily HH	1.06		0.10	0.56	+	0.17	1.58	***	0.10	1.46	***	0.14
Single Parent HH	0.83	*	0.06	0.87		0.20	1.33	***	0.05	1.53	***	0.13
W1 Parent Education[c]												
Some College	0.89		0.08	1.81	**	0.40	0.81	***	0.03	1.10		0.11
College Degree	0.61	***	0.06	0.97		0.19	0.59	***	0.02	0.91		0.08
Constant	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	***	0.00

p<.001***; p<.01**; p<.05*; p<.10+

Notes: [a]Non-Hispanic White = reference group; [b]2-Parent Biological/Adopted HH = reference group; [c]Parent has High School Education or Less = reference group. Sample N = 13,229; Population N= 15,678,020

Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health)



Notes: Results presented net of covariates (estimates derived from Table 3, Model 2). Predicted probabilities presented with 95% confidence intervals.

Appendix A1. First Partner Race/Union Type Differences in Coefficients for Parent-Child Relationship from Table 3, Model 2

	Same-Race Marriage (SRM)		Interracial Marriage (IRM)		Same-Race Cohabitation (SRC)		Interracial Cohabitation (IRC)	
Parent-Child Relationship (PCR) coefficient	0.02	**	0.00	ns	-0.02	***	-0.03	***
Difference of PCR coefficient vs SRM	---		-0.02	ns	-0.04	***	-0.05	***
Difference of PCR coefficient vs IRM	0.02	ns	---		-0.02	ns	-0.03	*
Difference of PCR coefficient vs SRC	0.04	***	0.02	ns	---		-0.02	*
Difference of PCR coefficient vs IRC	0.05	***	0.03	*	0.02	*	---	

note: p<.001***; p<.01**; p<.05*; ns= not significant; significance of differences in coefficients estimated using lincom in Stata; Sample N = 13,229; Population N= 15,678,020