RELATIONSHIP CONTEXT OF NONMARITAL CHILDBEARING

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Abstract

Using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort, we address two research questions: 1) What factors are associated with women's relationship status at the time of their child's birth?; and 2) Do these factors differ by race/ethnicity? We examine how characteristics of women, their families, and their partners are associated with relationship status at birth, comparing respondents who were 1) married, 2) cohabiting, and 3) non-married non-cohabiting at the time of recent births.

The odds of nonmarital childbearing are greater for younger, less educated, previously married, minority women who worked while pregnant, had disadvantaged family backgrounds, and had no previous children, and for women whose male partners are young, less educated, and of a different race than them. We found few racial/ethnic differences; although, having a partner of a different race is associated with lower odds of nonmarital childbearing for minorities, while the opposite is true for whites.

INTRODUCTION

Concern about the dramatic increase in nonmarital childbearing in the United States during recent decades has been ongoing, spurred by an extensive body of research that confirms that children do best when they grow up with two married biological parents in a low-conflict relationship (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Children born to unmarried mothers are more likely to be economically disadvantaged, to have low educational attainment, to grow up in a single-parent family, and to experience multiple transitions in living arrangements during childhood (Aquilino, 1996; Bane & Ellwood, 1986; Bumpass & Lu, 2000; Haveman, Wolfe, & Pence, 2001; Ryan, 2001; Seltzer, 2000). Children in single-parent households or with unstable living arrangements have more behavioral and emotional problems, reduced educational attainments, earlier sexual debut, and a greater likelihood of premarital childbearing (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Moore, Morrison, & Glei, 1995; Ryan, 2001; Wu, 1996). And, women who have a non-marital birth are less likely to ever marry, and, if they do marry, they face a greater chance of marital instability (Lichter & Graefe, 2001; Upchurch, Lillard, & Panis, 2001). Thus, reducing non-marital childbirth may have the indirect benefit of increasing the number of two-parent families and improving the stability of marriages and, therefore, ultimately improving child well-being.

Though unmarried parents have been the focus of much research in recent years, little attention has been devoted to the *relationship context* of nonmarital childbearing. Using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B), we address two research questions: 1) What factors are associated with women's relationship status at the time of their child's birth?; and 2) Do these factors differ by race/ethnicity?[1] We examine how characteristics

[1] Analyses still to be completed will also examine differences by parity.

of women, their families, and their partners are associated with relationship status at birth, comparing respondents who were 1) married, 2) cohabiting, and 3) neither married nor cohabiting at the time of recent births. We focus on mothers' sociodemographic factors, family background features, and fertility and marriage history information, as well as sociodemographic characteristics of the biological father. A key strength of our research is the use of newly available, nationally representative data that includes reports of both mother and father characteristics, as well as a focus on critical subpopulations.

BACKGROUND

One in three births in the United States (34.6% in 2003) occurs outside of marriage (Martin, Hamilton, & Sutton, 2005). The demographic composition of unmarried mothers has changed over time, with the most dramatic increases in rates and ratios apparent among women aged 20s and older, among whites, and among women who have already had a birth (Terry & Manlove, 2000). For example, teens account for a diminishing share of all nonmarital births. In 1970, half of all nonmarital births occurred to teens. By 2003, less than one-quarter of all nonmarital births (24%) were to teens (Martin et al., 2005). While the majority of women with a recent nonmarital birth have never been married, 16% were divorced or widowed (Terry-Humen et al., 2001).

Childbearing outside of marriage increasingly occurs within cohabiting relationships. For example, the percentage of nonmarital births that occurred to cohabiting couples increased from 29% in the early 1980s to 39% in the early 1990s (Bumpass & Lu, 2000). More recent estimates of cohabitation within an urban sample suggests that as many as 49% of nonmarital births occur to cohabiting couples (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2002a). On average, rates of

cohabitations are higher among the less educated, the low-income, those who grew up on welfare and in single-parent families, and those whose parents have low education (Bumpass & Lu, 2000; Manning & Lichter, 1996). Cohabitors are generally younger than married people (Osborne, 2002). Findings from the Fragile Families study suggest that there is substantial variation in the relationships between unmarried mothers and their child's biological father, even beyond cohabitation. At the time of the child's birth, half of unmarried parents in urban areas were living together in a cohabiting relationship; another one-third were in a "visiting" relationship where they were romantically involved but not living together; 8% reported they were "just friends" and only 9% reported little or no contact between biological parents (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2002b).

Women who have nonmarital births are, on average, more disadvantaged than women who have births within marriage; however, in assessing the consequences of nonmarital childbearing, it is difficult to disentangle the relative effects of disadvantage and nonmarital fertility. Women who have a nonmarital birth have lower educational attainments, reduced marriage prospects, lower incomes and a greater likelihood of receiving public assistance (Bennett, Bloom, & Miller, 1995; Driscoll et al., 1999; Moore, 1995). In fact, women who are aged 20 and older at the time of a nonmarital birth have economic outcomes that are as poor as those of women who are teens at the time of their nonmarital birth (Hoffman & Foster, 2001). Thus, it is important to understand what factors influence nonmarital childbearing and parents' relationship status at the time of their children's birth.

Theoretical Framework

A life-course approach provides a framework for assessing factors associated with transitions to nonmarital childbearing. One primary life-course principle, as well as a major component of an ecological perspective, is that life-course transitions, such as the transition to a nonmarital birth, can be understood only within the context of the relationships in which a person is involved (Bengston & Allen, 1993; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Numerous studies have found evidence that nonmarital childbearing and family formation are affected by variables from multiple contexts. We posit that relationship context and fertility decisions among individuals will be influenced by their individual characteristics, their relationships with their partners, partner characteristics, their individual behaviors, and their family background. Note that our assumption is that decisions about marriage are made by *couples*, not simply by women. By tracking information from the unmarried biological fathers of children about the time of their birth, we hope to help illuminate how the characteristics of couples at the time of the birth influence relationship context.

Mothers' Individual and Family Background Characteristics and Relationship Context

Women's sociodemographic characteristics, including age, race/ethnicitiy, education and employment status, show important relationships with nonmarital childbearing. The highest risk of nonmarital childbearing is among young women in their late teens and their twenties, with a lower likelihood of a nonmarital birth among women in their early teens, or aged 30 or older. Black and Hispanic women have higher rates of nonmarital childbearing than non-Hispanic whites (Martin et al., 2005), and women enrolled in school are less likely to have a nonmarital birth (Upchurch, Lillard, & Panis, 2002).

Family background characteristics, including family structure, parent education, and economic status growing up also are associated with teen childbearing (Manlove, 1998;

Manlove, Terry, Gitelson, Papillo, & Russell, 2000; Moore, Manlove, Glei, & Morrison, 1998). Growing up in an intact family and having higher parental education are associated with a lower likelihood of nonmarital childbearing (D.M. Upchurch et al., 2002). In addition, women who grew up in an economically advantaged family are less likely to have a nonmarital birth (D.M. Upchurch et al., 2002).

Lastly, women's fertility and marital histories influence relationship status at the time they give birth. Marital history and previous childbearing are associated with the risk of a nonmarital birth, but the findings are mixed. Some researchers find that separated or divorced women are more likely to have a nonmarital birth than never-married women (Manlove, Terry-Humen, & Williams, 2002), while others suggest that previously-married women are less likely to have a nonmarital birth (Upchurch, Lillard, Aneshensel, & Li, 2002; Upchurch et al., 2001). Women who have other children are at lower risk of having a nonmaritl conception (D.M. Upchurch et al., 2002).

Fathers' Characteristics and Relationship Context

Very little is known about the predictors of male fertility, and even less is known about how male characteristics might influence childbearing, net of female characteristics. However, evidence does suggest that men who father children before marriage have lower levels of educational attainment, higher levels of unemployment, and a greater likelihood of living in poverty than comparable peers who do not father children premaritally (Nock, 1998). In addition, it is well documented that racial and ethnic minority females are more likely to have nonmarital births (Gryn & Mott, 2002; Moore, Jekielek, & Emig, 2002; Terry-Humen, Manlove, & Moore, 2001), and so we expect the same of males. It is not known, however, whether being

of the same or different race/ethnicity as one's partner is an important correlate of nonmarital childbearing.

Race/Ethnicity Differences

In this paper, we examine differences in the predictors of relationship status at birth by race/ethnicity because there are striking disparities in childbearing outside of marriage among racial and ethnic groups. Nonmarital birth rates are higher among racial and ethnic minorities than among whites; however, nonmarital childbearing has increased among white women over time, while rates to African American women have declined (Martin et al., 2005). Note that Hispanic women now have the highest nonmarital birth rate of all racial and ethnic groups.

The likelihood of a birth occurring within cohabitation differs greatly by race/ethnicity. Data from the early 1990s suggest that 50% of births to unmarried white women and 53% of nonmarital Hispanic births occur to cohabiting parents. African Americans are least likely to report cohabiting relationships at the time of a nonmarital birth (22% in the early 1990s) (Bumpass & Lu, 2000). Whites have had the greatest increase in nonmarital births within cohabitation, increasing from 33% of nonmarital births in the early 1980s to 50% in the early 1990s. In fact, increases in nonmarital childbearing among whites are almost completely explained by increases in cohabitating unions (Bumpass & Lu, 2000).

Hypotheses

Based on the existing research literature, we offer several hypotheses for our analyses:

Hypothesis 1. We hypothesize that individual and partner resources will be associated with childbearing outside of marriage. Specifically, we hypothesize that the likelihood of a

nonmarital birth will be greater among individuals and partners who are younger, have less education, are unemployed, or have had a previous birth outside of marriage.

Hypothesis 2. Women with a prior nonmarital birth will be more likely to have another birth outside of marriage. Because of greater levels of experience with contraception within relationships, we hypothesize that women who are separated or divorced will have reduced likelihood of nonmarital birth, especially of an unintended nonmarital birth, net of other factors.

Hypothesis 3. We anticipate that characteristics of the respondents' own family background will be associated with the likelihood of a nonmarital birth. Growing up in a two-parent family with both biological parents is hypothesized to be associated with a reduced likelihood of a nonmarital birth. However, parental separation/ divorce will be associated with a greater likelihood of a nonmarital birth.

Hypothesis 4. We hypothesize that racial/ethnic differences in nonmarital childbearing will be explained, in part, by different family background characteristics, family formation history characteristics, and individual and partner characteristics of women and men in different sub-populations. For example, higher levels of nonmarital childbearing among racial and ethnic minorities will be explained in part by their different family background environments and personal characteristics.

DATA AND METHODS

Data

This study used data from the first wave of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B), a nationally representative study of 10,688 children born in 2001. Data collection for this wave occurred approximately 9 months after the birth of the child and consisted of four components: a parent interview, child assessments, resident and non-resident

father questionnaires,[2] and data from the child's birth certificate. Subsequent waves of data collection will occur as the focal children reach ages 24 months and four years, upon entering kindergarten, and upon entering first grade. In this paper, information on mother and father characteristics, some father's characteristics, and mother's and father's relationship with one another at the time of the child's birth was drawn from the parent questionnaire and the birth certificate.

Sample

We drew our sample from 10,105 children who resided with their biological or adoptive mother, whose biological or adoptive mother responded to the parent questionnaire, and who had valid sample weights. We excluded 65 cases for whom we were unable to establish the status of the relationship between their biological mother and biological father at the time of birth. Our final analytic sample consisted of 10,040 children.

Measures

Dependent variable. Our dependent variable – marital status at birth – has three categories: married to the biological father at birth, cohabiting with the biological father at birth, or neither married to or cohabiting with the biological father at birth. We derived this measure from multiple questions in the marital history and partner relationship section of the parent questionnaire. Among biological mothers who were living with the biological father at the time of the assessment, these items included marital status at the time of the nine month survey,

[2] The non-resident father questionnaire was administered to biological fathers living outside the household who were eligible for the survey. Fathers were eligible in cases where the mother identified him, where he met the visitation criterion (saw child once in the previous month, saw child at least seven days in the last three months, or was in touch with the child's birth mother at least once a month in the three months preceding the parent interview), and where the mother gave contact information and permission to contact the child's father.

marriage dates, and, if applicable, cohabitation dates. If the biological father was not living in the household at the time of the survey, then mothers were asked to report on any previous marriage and/or cohabitation history regarding the biological father. Biological mothers who were separated or divorced from the biological father at the time of the birth were classified as neither married to nor cohabiting with the biological father.

Mother's individual characteristics. We included four measures of mother's individual characteristics: age at birth (from the birth certificate data), race/ethnicity (comparing non-Hispanic black, Hispanic, and other teens to non-Hispanic white teens), education and work status. In bivariate analyses, we used a categorical measure of education comparing those with less than high school, high school, some college and college education. In multivariate analyses we used a continuous measure, ranging from 1 (eighth grade or lower) to 9 (doctoral or graduate degree). Mother's work status measured whether or not the mother worked at all in the 12 months before the child's birth.

Mother's family background characteristics. We included three measures of mother's family background characteristics. A measure captures of whether or not the mother lived with both of her biological parents until age 16 captured childhood family structure. We measured parent education by taking the educational attainment of the mother's more highly educated parent. Childhood economic status was assessed by a measure of welfare receipt during childhood, in response to the question, "Did any of the people that you lived with during your school years- about age 5 to age 16 -ever receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) or welfare?"

Mother's fertility and marriage history. We assessed mother's fertility and marriage history with two measures: parity of the focal child, and whether or not the mother had been

married to someone other than the biological father prior to the birth of the focal child. We created a dichotomous measure of parity, comparing those who had no other births prior to the focal child and those who had any other births prior to the focal child. [3] In order to assess whether or not the mother had been previously married to someone other than the biological father, we calculated the number of marriages reported by the mother at the time of birth.[4]

*Father's individual characteristics***.** We included three measures of father's individual characteristics: age at birth of focal child, education, and whether or not the father is the same race as the biological mother. We derived father's age at birth from both the birth certificate and mother's report of father's date of birth,[5] while we derived father's education from mother's response to the question, "What is the highest grade or year of school that he has completed?" We assessed whether or not the biological father is the same race as the biological mother by comparing mother's race with either the ECLS-B composite variable of household father's race, the race of the biological father reported on the birth certificate, or with the child's race.[6]

[3] We drew parity information from the parent questionnaire, when available. If the information was missing, we captured parity from the number of live births reported on the birth certificate.

[4]We considered mothers who reported being married more than once or who reported only one marriage but were not married to the biological father at birth as having had a previous marriage, while those who were never married or who reported one marriage to the biological father were coded as not having had a previous marriage.

[5] Where available, we used the report of father's age from the birth certificate. However, 14.1% of the sample had no father age information reported on the birth certificate. In those cases, we used mother reports of the biological father's date of birth and compared it with the child's date of birth in order to calculate father's age at the time of birth.

[6]The biological father was not asked to report directly on his race in the father questionnaires. Therefore, we compared mother's race with race of household father for 7,868 cases where the biological father was living in the household with the biological mother, else we compared mother's race with the race of the biological father reported on the birth certificate for 1,153 cases. For 1,019 cases where no biological father race was reported on the birth certificate, we used child's race as a proxy for father's race and compared that to mother's race. If they matched, we assumed the father and mother were the same race. We recognize that using child's race is not a perfect proxy for father's race. However, we feel confident in our decision because in 93% of the cases in which a measure of father's race was available and the father's race matched the child's race, the father's race also matched the mother's race.

Bivariate Results

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 describes our sample. On average, mothers were approximately 27 years old at the time of the focal child's birth with nearly two-thirds (63%) of mothers under age 30. More than one-half of mothers (57%) were non-Hispanic white, approximately one-half (51%) had received at least some college education, and 72% had worked in the 12 months prior to the focal child's birth. More than one-half of respondents (58%) lived with both their biological parents until age 16, while less than half of the respondents' parents had received at least some college education (46%), and 11% reported family welfare receipt during their childhood. Forty percent of our sample were first-time mothers, and 15% had been married previously to someone other than the biological father of the focal child.

The fathers in our sample were slightly older than the mothers, with an average age of thirty years at the time of the focal child's birth. Approximately one-half were under age thirty (49%). Despite being older, fathers had slightly lower education levels than the mothers, with approximately half having a high school education or less (52%). Most of the fathers were the same race or ethnicity as the mother (90%).

Full Sample

Table 1 also shows bivariate associations between our predictor variables and biological parents' marital status at the time of the focal child's birth. Mothers who were married to the biological father at the time of the focal child's birth tended to be older than those who were either cohabiting with or neither married to nor cohabiting with the biological father at birth. Almost half (48%) of married mothers were aged 30 or older compared with only 19% of

cohabiting mothers and 16% of mothers who were neither married nor cohabiting. More than two-thirds (68%) of married mothers were non-Hispanic white, compared with 44% of cohabiting mothers, and 32% of mothers in the "neither" category who were non-Hispanic white. A substantial proportion of mothers cohabiting at birth were Hispanic (36%), while more than two-fifths of those neither married nor cohabiting at birth were non-Hispanic black. Mothers who were married to the biological father at the time of birth reported higher levels of education than those who were cohabiting or who were neither married nor cohabiting. Almost two-thirds (65%) of married mothers had received at least some college education compared to 26% of both cohabiting mothers and mothers who were neither married nor cohabiting. Approximately three-quarters (74%) of cohabiting mothers and mothers who were neither married nor cohabiting had a high school degree or less.

Two-thirds of mothers who were married to the biological father at the time of birth grew up in a stable, two biological parent household (67%) compared with 43% of cohabiting mothers and 40% of mothers in the "neither" group. Married mothers were more likely than cohabiting mothers or mothers who were neither married nor cohabiting to have parents with at least some college education (54% versus 30% and 33%, respectively), and less likely to have received welfare during their childhood (7% versus 17% and 20%, respectively). Mothers who were married at the time of birth were the most likely group to have had children previously (65%), while mothers who were neither married nor cohabiting were the most likely to be having a first birth (53%). Married mothers were less likely to report being previously married (13%) than cohabiting mothers (18%) and those in the "neither" category (21%).

Focusing on father characteristics, married fathers were older (average age of 32 years) than cohabiting fathers (27 years) and fathers who were neither married nor cohabiting when the

focal child was born (36 years). Seventy percent of cohabiting fathers and 74% of fathers who were neither married nor cohabiting were under age 30 at the time of birth, compared with 38% of married fathers. In addition to being older, married fathers were more likely to have at least some college education (62%) than cohabiting fathers (24%) and fathers in the "neither" group (19%). Married fathers also were less likely to be the same race or ethnicity as the mother (84%) than those who were cohabiting or neither married nor cohabiting (87%).

Race/Ethnicity Samples

For all racial and ethnic groups, married mothers tended to be older and more educated than cohabiting mothers and mothers who were neither married nor cohabiting. However, 31% of Hispanic married mothers were under age 25, compared with 19% of whites and 16% of blacks, and only 37% of Hispanic married mothers had at least some college education (versus 72% and 61% for whites and blacks, respectively). For whites, employment did not vary by marital status, but it did for blacks and Hispanics. Among black mothers, working during the year before the child's birth was least common for those who were neither married nor cohabiting (70%), and among Hispanic mothers, those who were cohabiting (53%) were least likely to have worked before the birth.

Regardless of race or ethnicity, married mothers were more likely than those in the cohabiting or "neither" groups to have lived with both of their parents until age 16. Among white and black populations, the parents of married mothers were more likely to have at least some college education than cohabiting mothers or mothers who did not live with their partner. However, among Hispanics, parental education was significantly higher for married mothers (23%) compared with cohabiting mothers only (16%). Across all subpopulations, married

mothers were less likely to have received welfare during their childhood, and were more likely to have had a previous birth than cohabiting mothers and mothers who were neither married nor cohabiting. Among white and Hispanic mothers, those who were married at the time of birth were least likely to have been previously married to someone other than the focal child's biological father, and those who were neither married to nor cohabiting with the biological father at birth were most likely to have been previously married.

Across all three racial/ethnic groups, married fathers were older and more educated than cohabiting fathers and fathers who were neither married nor cohabiting. Among white mothers, those who were married were more likely to have a partner of the same race (94%) than cohabiters (80%) and those who were neither married nor cohabiting (78%). Among Hispanic mothers however, those who were married at the time of birth were least likely to have a partner of the same race (84%), compared with those mothers who were cohabiting (90%) or neither married nor cohabiting (90%). Having a partner of the same race was not significantly related to marital status for black mothers.

Multivariate Results

Full Sample

Mother's individual characteristics (age, race/ethnicity, education, and employment) are associated with marital status at the birth of the focal child. Younger mothers had lower odds than older mothers of being married at the birth of the focal child. Compared to mothers aged 25 to 29, younger mothers had twice the odds (relative risk ratio, 2.65) of cohabiting and three times the odds of being neither married nor cohabiting (relative risk ratio, 3.22), and the odds of being in the "neither" category were 42% lower for mothers aged 30 to 34 (relative risk ratio, 0.58).

Black mothers, Hispanic mothers, and mothers of "other" race/ethnicity all had greater odds of cohabiting or being in the "neither" category than white mothers. In addition, compared to white mothers, black mothers had increased odds of cohabiting versus being in the "neither" category. More highly educated mothers had greater odds of being married when the gave birth to the focal child. For each unit increase in education level, the odds of cohabiting at birth decreased by 21% (relative risk ratio, 0.79), and the odds of neither cohabiting with nor being married to the biological father decreased by 25% (relative risk ratio, 0.75). Mothers who worked in the 12 months before the birth had lower odds than non-workers of being married to the biological father at the child's birth.

(Table 2 about here)

Family background and fertility/marital history also influence mother's marital status at birth. Mothers who lived with both of their biological parents until age 16 had 39% lower odds of cohabiting (relative risk ratio, 0.61) and 31% lower odds of "neither" (relative risk ratio, 0.69) than those who experienced some other family structure situation, while those who received welfare as children had reduced odds of being married to the biological father at birth, compared to non-welfare recipients. Women who had given birth prior to the focal child had greater odds of being married and of cohabiting when the focal child was born. For these women, the odds of cohabiting with the biological father (versus being married to the biological father) were 22% lower, the odds of "neither" (versus being married to the biological father) were 58% lower, and the odds of cohabiting (versus "neither") were 86% higher than for mothers who had never had other children. Mothers who had been married to someone other than the biological father prior to the birth of the focal child had three times the odds of cohabiting with versus being married to the biological father (relative risk ratio, 3.24) and nearly seven times the odds (relative risk ratio,

6.92) of being in the "neither" category when the focal child was born, compared to mothers who had not been previously married. The odds of cohabitation versus being in the "neither" category for these mothers were 53% higher than for never-married mothers.

Father's characteristics have additional effects on marital status at birth, even after controlling for mother's characteristics. The odds of cohabiting and "neither" both were greater for mothers who reported that the biological father was younger than 25 years old at the birth, and the odds of "neither" were also greater for mothers who reported that the biological father was 30 to 34 years old, compared to those who reported that the father was between 25 and 29 years old. Mothers who reported that the biological father was 30 to 34 years old at the time of the birth also had lower odds of cohabiting versus being in the "neither" category than mothers whose male partner was 25 to 29 years old. Mothers who reported that the biological father was more highly educated had greater odds of being married at the birth of the focal child than those with a less educated partner. For each one unit increase in father's education level the odds of both cohabiting and "neither" were reduced by 18% (relative risk ratio, 0.82). The odds of cohabiting or being in the "neither" category were approximately 60% greater for mothers who were not the same race as the biological father (relative risk ratios, 1.61 and 1.65, respectively) than for those who where the same race.

Race/Ethnicity Samples

Subgroup analyses examined differences in the predictors of marital status at birth for whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Compared to mothers aged 25 to 29, mothers aged 25 and younger in all three racial/ethnic groups had reduced odds of being married at birth, while for whites and Hispanics, mothers aged 30 to 34 had greater odds of being married to the biological

father. Higher levels of education were associated with increased odds of marriage for all three racial/ethnic subgroups, and for black mothers only, higher levels of education were associated with increased odds of cohabitation versus "neither." Mothers in the white subgroup who worked in the 12 months prior to the birth of the focal child had decreased odds of marriage, relative to those who did not work.

We found both similarities and differences in the effect of mother's family background and fertility/marital history across the three racial/ethnic subgroups. The odds of being married to the biological father at birth were greater for white and Hispanic mothers who lived with both biological parents until age 16 (relative to those in other family structure situations), and additionally, white mothers who lived with both parents until age 16 had lower odds of cohabitation versus "neither." For Hispanics only, mothers who received welfare during their own childhood had greater odds of cohabitation versus marriage than mothers who never received welfare while growing up. Compared to women with no prior births, mothers in all three subgroups who had any births prior to the focal child had increased odds of both marriage and cohabitation versus "neither." In addition, white mothers with any prior births had increased odds of marriage versus cohabitation. The odds of cohabiting or "neither" versus married and the odds of "neither" versus cohabiting were greater for all mothers, regardless of subgroup, who had been married to someone other than the biological father prior to the birth than for mothers who had never been married to someone else.

Father's characteristics were also important across the three racial/ethnic subgroups. Compared to fathers aged 25 to 29, fathers under age 25 were associated with decreased odds of marriage for mothers in all racial/ethnic subgroups, and for whites, younger fathers were also associated with decreased odds of cohabitation versus "neither." For whites and Hispanics,

fathers aged 30 to 34 were associated with decreased odds of marriage versus "neither" and with decreased odds of cohabitation versus "neither" for whites only. Also for whites only, mothers who report the biological fathers were aged 35 or older had higher odds of being in the "neither" category than either being married or cohabiting at the birth of the focal child. Mothers partnered with fathers who have higher levels of education exhibited increased odds of marriage for whites and blacks only. Being of a different race than the biological father was associated with increased odds of marriage for black and Hispanic mothers, but it was associated with twice the odds of cohabitation and three times the odds of being neither married nor cohabiting for white mothers, relative to mothers with same-race partners.

DISCUSSION (still to be written)

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Table 1. Characteristics of biological parents of children born in 2001, by mother's marital status at birth, relative to the biological father (ECLS-B baseline data)

		Full Sample				White				Black				Hispanic			
	Total	Married	Cohabiting	Neither	Sig.	Married	Cohabiting	Neither	Sig.	Married	Cohabiting	Neither	Sig.	Married	Cohabiting	Neither	Sig.
N=	10,040	6,393	1,888	1,759		3,500	690	450		461	359	827		953	530	285	
Mom's Individual Characteristics																	
Mean age at birth of focal child	27.3	29.3	24.2	23.4	a,b,c	29.6	23.9	23.3	a,c	29.8	24.6	22.9	a,b,c	27.7	24.3	24.1	a,c
Age at birth of focal child																	
<25	36.1%	20.9%	62.3%	65.9%	a,c	18.7%	67.7%	66.7%	a,c	16.3%	59.1%	69.1%	a,b,c	30.8%	57.9%	60.6%	a,c
25-29	26.5%	30.9%	18.7%	18.4%	a,c	30.5%	14.8%	18.1%	a,c	34.1%	21.0%	16.7%	a,c	31.0%	22.0%	21.8%	a,c
30-34	23.6%	30.4%	12.5%	9.5%	a,b,c	31.7%	11.3%	8.2%	a,c	27.6%	11.3%	10.2%	a,c	26.3%	14.2%	7.9%	a,b,c
35+	13.8%	17.8%	6.5%	6.2%	a,c	19.1%	6.2%	7.0%	a,c	21.9%	8.7%	4.0%	a,b,c	12.0%	6.0%	9.6%	a
Race/ethnicity																	
White	57.3%	67.8%	43.9%	31.7%	a,b,c	---	---	---		---	---	---		---	---	---	
Black	13.9%	6.2%	15.5%	41.6%	a,b,c	---	---	---		---	---	---		---	---	---	
Hispanic	22.9%	19.2%	35.8%	22.7%	a,b,c	---	---	---		---	---	---		---	---	---	
Other	5.9%	6.8%	4.8%	4.0%	a,c	---	---	---		---	---	---		---	---	---	
Education																	
HS grad or less	49.0%	35.4%	74.0%	73.8%	a,c	28.0%	71.5%	65.9%	a,c	38.8%	67.0%	75.4%	a,b,c	62.9%	82.2%	83.0%	a,c
Some college or higher	51.0%	64.6%	26.0%	26.2%	a,c	72.0%	28.5%	34.1%	a,c	61.2%	33.0%	24.6%	a,b,c	37.1%	17.8%	17.0%	a,c
Worked in 12 months before birth	71.7%	72.4%	69.9%	70.7%		75.9%	79.4%	80.6%		78.8%	78.9%	69.8%	b,c	59.8%	53.2%	59.4%	a
Mom's Family Background Characteristics																	
Lived with both parents until age 16	58.2%	67.1%	43.0%	40.4%	a,c	68.9%	37.5%	45.2%	a,b,c	46.0%	32.1%	30.3%	a,c	66.7%	55.7%	51.1%	a,c
Parents' education																	
HS grad or less	54.2%	46.3%	70.3%	67.2%	a,c	37.4%	61.9%	58.0%	a,c	57.8%	67.2%	69.0%	a,c	76.8%	84.3%	78.9%	a
Some college or higher	45.8%	53.7%	29.7%	32.8%	a,c	62.6%	38.1%	42.0%	a,c	42.2%	32.8%	31.0%	a,c	23.2%	15.7%	21.1%	a
Received welfare during childhood	10.9%	6.8%	16.5%	20.3%	a,b,c	5.7%	16.3%	15.1%	a,c	16.7%	25.9%	27.5%	a,c	7.2%	13.0%	13.6%	a,c
Mom's Fertility & Marriage History																	
Parity																	
No prior births	39.7%	35.4%	43.1%	52.8%	a,b,c	35.9%	46.7%	59.5%	a,b,c	23.3%	36.1%	46.0%	a,b,c	34.9%	42.6%	55.8%	a,b,c
Any prior births	60.3%	64.6%	56.9%	47.2%	a,b,c	64.1%	53.3%	40.5%	a,b,c	76.7%	63.9%	54.0%	a,b,c	65.1%	57.4%	44.2%	a,b,c
Ever married to someone else before birth	15.0%	12.7%	17.8%	20.5%	a,c	14.6%	24.5%	31.7%	a,b,c	9.2%	7.6%	10.6%		8.7%	13.1%	22.5%	a,b,c
Dad's Individual Characteristics																	
Mean age at birth of focal child	29.9	31.6	26.9	26.0	a,b,c	31.8	26.5	25.9	a,c	33.0	27.5	25.6	a,b,c	30.3	26.9	26.4	a,c
Age at birth of focal child																	
<25	24.3%	12.5%	44.8%	50.3%	a,b,c	11.6%	46.9%	54.4%	a,c	8.8%	43.2%	50.6%	a,c	18.1%	43.0%	45.9%	a,c
25-29	24.7%	25.0%	24.9%	23.5%		23.9%	26.0%	16.6%	b,c	26.0%	23.3%	25.2%		29.2%	24.6%	29.5%	
30-34	26.2%	31.8%	16.7%	13.2%	a,b,c	32.9%	14.8%	14.8%	a,c	28.8%	16.6%	12.5%	a,c	28.0%	19.4%	10.8%	a,b,c
35+	24.9%	30.7%	13.7%	13.1%	a,c	31.6%	12.4%	14.2%	a,c	36.5%	16.9%	11.7%	a,c	24.8%	13.0%	13.7%	a,c
Education																	
HS grad or less	51.8%	38.4%	76.3%	80.8%	a,b,c	30.6%	72.3%	80.0%	a,b,c	43.4%	73.1%	79.7%	a,c	68.8%	82.8%	86.7%	a,c
Some college or higher	48.2%	61.6%	23.7%	19.2%	a,b,c	69.4%	27.7%	20.0%	a,b,c	56.6%	26.9%	20.3%	a,c	31.2%	17.2%	13.3%	a,c
Same race as bio mom	89.6%	83.7%	86.6%	87.3%	a,c	93.8%	79.6%	78.1%	a,c	91.6%	95.3%	95.2%		84.2%	90.1%	90.0%	a,c

--- Not applicable for this sample.

[a] Comparison between the married and cohabiting category is significant at the p<.05 level.

[b] Comparison between the cohabiting and neither category is significant at the p<.05 level.

[c] Comparison between the married and neither category is significant at the p<.05 level.

Table 2. Relative risk ratios from multinomial logistic regression analyses of the likelihood that mothers were cohabiting with or neither married to nor cohabiting with the biological father at the time of their child's birth, by selected characteristics (ECLS-B baseline data)

	Large Sample n=10,040			White Sample n=4640			Black Sample n=1,647			Hispanic Sample n=1,768		
	Cohabiting vs. Married	Neither vs. Married	Cohabiting vs. Neither	Cohabiting vs. Married	Neither vs. Married	Cohabiting vs. Neither	Cohabiting vs. Married	Neither vs. Married	Cohabiting vs. Neither	Cohabiting vs. Married	Neither vs. Married	Cohabiting vs. Neither
Mom's Individual Characteristics												
Age at birth												
<25	2.65 ***	3.22 ***		3.96 ***	3.83 ***		2.99 ***	3.70 ***		1.79 *	2.52 ***	
25-29 (ref)	(1.00)	(1.00)		(1.00)	(1.00)		(1.00)	(1.00)		(1.00)	(1.00)	
30-34	0.85	0.58 **	+	1.08	0.45 *	+	0.82	0.95		0.85	0.47 *	
35+	0.78	0.68		1.13	0.68		0.77	0.45 +		0.77	1.55	
Race/ethnicity												
White (ref)	(1.00)	(1.00)		---	---		---	---		---	---	
Black	3.77 ***	17.67 ***	***	---	---		---	---		---	---	
Hispanic	1.83 ***	1.68 ***		---	---		---	---		---	---	
Other	1.14	1.43 *		---	---		---	---		---	---	
Education	0.79 ***	0.75 ***		0.76 ***	0.78 ***		0.83 *	0.70 ***	**	0.81 **	0.79 **	
Worked in 12 months before birth	1.31 **	1.24 +		1.60 **	1.51 *		1.60 +	1.11	+	0.94	1.12	
Mom's Family Background Characteristics												
Lived with both parents until age 16	0.61 ***	0.69 **		0.53 ***	0.74 *	*	0.80	0.79		0.72 *	0.64 +	
Parents' education	0.97	0.99		0.96	0.94		1.01	1.00		1.00	1.09	
Received welfare during childhood	1.31 *	1.36 *		1.34	1.28		1.12	1.06		1.60 *	1.61 +	
Mom's Fertility & Marriage History												
Fertility history												
No prior births (ref)	(1.00)	(1.00)		(1.00)	(1.00)		(1.00)	(1.00)		(1.00)	(1.00)	
Any prior birth	0.78 **	0.42 ***	***	0.70 **	0.33 ***	***	0.69	0.43 ***	*	0.85	0.41 ***	**
Ever married to someone else before birth	3.24 ***	6.92 ***	***	3.43 ***	7.22 ***	**	1.86 +	4.36 ***	**	3.06 ***	7.95 ***	**
Dad's Individual Characteristics (mom reports)												
Age at birth												
<25	1.95 ***	2.08 ***		1.60 *	2.79 ***	*	2.66 ***	2.28 **		2.03 **	1.50	
(ref)	(1.00)	(1.00)		(1.00)	(1.00)		(1.00)	(1.00)		(1.00)	(1.00)	
30-34	0.99	1.86 ***	***	0.84	3.11 ***	***	0.95	0.97		1.12	1.85 *	
35+	0.93	1.04		0.84	2.03 *	*	0.94	0.68		0.91	0.68	
Education	0.82 ***	0.82 ***		0.80 ***	0.75 ***		0.81 *	0.77 **		0.95	1.00	
Different race from bio mom	1.61 ***	1.65 **		2.47 ***	3.36 ***	+	0.48	0.34 *		0.79	0.59 *	

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