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Fatherhood Across Two Generations Factors Affecting Early Family Roles

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Abstract

This article examines the determinants of men's early parental roles, distinguishing factors that affect being a father versus being childless, and factors that affect being a resident versus a nonresident father, in the context of having a partner or not. We also consider whether these patterns have changed between 1985 and 2004. The data come from the linked Child-Mother and Young Adult Samples of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79), which provide information on the children of the NLSY79 from birth until they enter young adulthood, and from the original youth sample of parallel ages. The results support previous research showing the importance of economic and educational disadvantages and nontraditional family structure on being a non-resident father. The effects of family structure appear to have attenuated between generations as determinants of men's early parental roles.

Keywords

fatherhood; family structure; cohort change

Until recently, contemporary research on transitions to parenthood had focused almost exclusively on women. Little was known about men's transition to fatherhood, not only because their reports were incomplete and often inaccurate compared to women's (Goldscheider & Kaufman, 1996; Rendall, Clarke, Peters, Nalini, & Verropoulou, 1999), but also because of the bias toward motherhood. However, recent changes in the living arrangements of the population make understanding fatherhood more important. With the rise in out-of-wedlock childbearing and divorce in the last quarter of the 20th century, not only do women increasingly parent without a residential partner but also men parent without residential children.

In this article, we focus on the key correlates of the parental and partner statuses of young men. We examine the determinants of men's early parental and partner roles, distinguishing factors that affect being a father versus being childless and being a resident versus a

nonresident father, in the context of having a partner or not. We distinguish three central contexts that are likely to shape young men's acquisition of early family roles as parents and partners: the family structures they experienced, which may increase their likelihood of taking more and less traditional family structures of their own; their financial well-being in childhood, which might provide options for continued education that would deter early family formation; and the time period in which they grew up. We expect the effects of financial well-being to endure, but we consider the possibility that the effects of family structure on child well-being might have attenuated over time as nonstandard family structures have become more common (Amato & Keith, 1991).

New longitudinal data sets that follow young men through these critical transitions into adulthood gather the necessary information on men's father statuses and collect it more accurately than retrospective cross-sectional surveys (Rendall et al., 1999). Two cohorts of young men ages 20 to 26 can be discerned with the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) family of data sets, one in the early 1980s and the other early in the 21st century.

Background and Hypotheses

Increases in relationship instability and in the proportion of children living with single mothers are linked to a lower likelihood of men living with children (Hogan & Goldscheider, 2001). Nevertheless, in recent decades, single-father families have grown even faster than single-mother families. In 2000, single-father families comprised 1 in 6 single-parent families compared to 1 in 10 in 1970 (Fields & Casper, 2001). In other words, the separation of marriage and parenthood could be proceeding for men as it has for women, but gendered custody patterns make male patterns of parenthood necessarily different from female patterns (Greene & Biddlecom, 2000). These parenting patterns may, in turn, have implications for children's healthy development. Hence, it is important to learn more about the determinants of this dimension of family change from the perspective of men. This article develops hypotheses from social, economic, and evolutionary theories to explain men's father statuses and how these might have changed.

Family Structure and Role Modeling

Social learning theory suggests that the family type while growing up may be related to family roles in young adulthood (Caspi & Elder, 1988; Sroufe & Fleeson, 1988). Children learn patterns of behavior by observing family members and the consequences that follow their behaviors (Bandura, 1976). Behavior has to be observed, and it must be rewarded to be learned. Children of single mothers may learn male behavior and attitudes from men who are not linked to families and therefore may be more likely to become nonresidential fathers than residential fathers (Cunningham & Thornton, 2006; England & Edin, 2007). Besides this observational learning of family patterns and processes, they may be directly rewarded for their contributions to the family. For example, young men who grew up without their biological fathers or in families experiencing economic hardships have been shown to become economically independent at an earlier age (elder, 1999). They may also become more involved in caring for siblings. Both their greater involvement with children and early economic independence may make them more likely to become young fathers. Furthermore, they may have experienced conflict and other stresses from which they wish to escape (Amato, 2000).

Resources in Childhood

The theoretical framework argues that family resources are critical in shaping how young men become parents and how involved they are in rearing children (Brooks-Gunn, Brown,

Duncan, & Moore, 1995). Evolutionary theory suggests that fathers desire to have their own biological children (and only their biological children), regardless of whether they live with them (Hofferth & Anderson, 2003). Although in the past, simply begetting many children was sufficient for attaining evolutionary success, today the goal of most fathers is to have *high-quality* children (Becker, 1991). This requires both money and time, that is, “involved” and ordinarily residential parenthood (Haveman & Wolfe, 1994).

Young men who were reared in economically disadvantaged households, as proxied by a lower level of parental education and by lower household income during the childhood years, will likely not have experienced a high level of investment in them and, not having witnessed or experienced the benefits of greater investment, will be less prone to invest in their own children. However, because childbearing is desirable, they will be more likely to have children at a young age and more likely to be nonresidential fathers. Low family resources also limit the extent to which youth benefit from remaining close to their family of origin. Young men who were children of women who began childbearing as teenagers or who grew up in large families are also likely to be disadvantaged and are expected to be more likely to be young fathers and to be nonresidential fathers, again because of lack of role models or because of pressure on family resources.

Current Circumstances

Having a child before one is “ready” can create problems, as it is less likely to allow engaged parenthood. Those who are older, have attained full-time employment, and have completed their educational programs (either high school or college) should be able to make the transition to engaged (residential) parenthood more successfully than those who have not. The causal direction for these relationships, however, is less clear than for those involving family background. Single fathers living with their children, for example, even more than those with a partner, need to be providers. Given that many men come to single-parent status through unusual routes (including losing partners to addiction, incarceration, or mental illness), they may not have as positive background characteristics as those with a residential partner. Because they have chosen to live with their child instead of remaining nonresidential fathers, this may imply acceptance of greater responsibility and greater investment.

Demographic Factors

We also consider race/ethnicity and region of residence. Race/ethnicity may proxy disadvantage or it may reflect differences in cultural expectations across different communities. Young Black men have been found to be both more likely than young White men to father children at an early age and less likely to live with them (Hynes, Yang, Joyner, & Peters, 2008); hence, we expect the same results here. Finally, growing up in the South is associated with traditional family patterns (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991) and should be associated with having a partner and children and living with them.

Change Over Time

The major factor that might affect these two cohorts differentially is the rapid change in family structure that has reduced the proportions of children who grow up with both biological parents. As these forms become more common, it is possible that their effects will attenuate. This could result from several factors. First, growing up with a single parent may be less stigmatized so that children in these households are less likely to act out sexually. Second, single mothers today may be better able and equipped to rear their children without a partner. When the later cohort was growing up in the early 1990s, social and institutional supports for single mothers, such as public expenditures for families via child care programs, the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, and the Earned Income Tax Credit,

were on the rise (Hofferth, Phillips, & Cabrera, 2001). The higher prevalence of divorce may reduce barriers to effective coparenting with a nonresident ex-partner. Finally, men may work harder to be a good father after divorce than in the past, and both parents may be aware of potential problems and work to ameliorate negative impacts (Amato & Keith, 1991).

Partnership Status

Finally, most men experience residential fatherhood as a “package deal” that includes living with a partner (Townsend, 2002). This makes it important to consider how men's partnership statuses interrelate with their father statuses. Being a good provider is the most important characteristic that women want in a partner (South, 1991), suggesting that overall, fathers residing both with children and a partner will have positive characteristics. However, because a substantial proportion of the members of our sample are still young, we expect that postponing both children and a partner is for many a wise choice and will be associated with a relatively advantaged background.

Hypotheses

Our first hypothesis is that young men who lived with a single mother or a stepfather in adolescence will be more likely to transition early to partnerships and parenthood, particularly nonresidential parenthood, than those who lived with two biological parents.

Our second hypothesis is that young men from socioeconomically disadvantaged families will be more likely than those from advantaged families to transition to partnership and parenthood early, especially to nonresident parenthood.

Our third hypothesis is that the effect of growing up in a nontraditional family structure will have attenuated between cohorts of young men growing up in the early 1980s and the early 2000s.

Method

Sample

This article analyzed data from the NLSY79. The survey contains information on two generations of young adults: (a) men and women 14 to 21 in 1979, the participants of the original study, which we call the earlier cohort (also called “youth”), and (b) those women's own children in their early to mid-20s in 2004, the later generations (also called “young adults”). We examine the males from each of these generations. The youth of the NLSY79 study were age 14 to 21 in 1979; we examined them in 1985, focusing only on those young men age 20 to 26.

The NLSY79 obtained detailed information on the children of the women (the Child-Mother Study) and in 1988 began interviewing them as they entered their teen years (age 10 and earlier). According to the survey documentation, approximately 90% of the children these women ever bore are included in this assessment (Center for Human Resource Research, 2004). Starting in 1994, children 15 and older were interviewed using questionnaires similar to those given their mothers, and beginning in 2000, these young adults were interviewed in a separate research project, the Young Adult Study (Mott, 2002). We examined them as of 2004 when they were the same age that the earlier cohort was in 1985 (20 to 26). The comparative analysis of the two cohorts allows us to examine change.

The earlier cohort is a representative national sample of young adult men aged 14 to 21 in 1979. The later cohort represents the children of women in the same age range. The older

young men in the later cohort were necessarily the children of very young women. Interestingly, however, members of the earlier cohort were also the children of relatively young mothers, born as they were in the later years of the baby boom (1958-1965), before the massive increase in age at marriage and parenthood that began in the early to mid-1970s (Cherlin, 1992).

Nevertheless, the later cohort is disproportionately from more disadvantaged families for its time. The average age at first birth of the mothers of the young adults in this sample was less than 20 years, nearly 2 years below the average age of 21.8 at first birth in 1975, just before the NLSY mothers started bearing children (Mathews & Hamilton, 2002). As the data collection continues, the sample will include more young men who were born to nonteenage mothers, making it more representative of all young adult males (Mott, 2002). We caution that our sample does not represent all young men age 20 to 26 in 2004, as our group disproportionately represents the off-spring of younger mothers. All data are weighted to represent the national population of young men of the appropriate ages in the two studies. We created custom weights for the 1985 and the 2004 data, which were normalized so that sample sizes represent actual numbers.

Measures

We constructed comparable measures for each cohort to the extent possible. In most cases, the comparable measures are identical; in others, they are close. We indicate these differences in the description of variables below. We also describe the more complex methods used to deal with missing values for the relevant measures.

Residence and relationship to children—The dependent variable for each cohort was created by examining whether the young man had fathered a child and, if so, whether he lived with his biological child(ren) and whether he lived with a partner in 1985 and 2004, respectively. From this cross-classification, we created five mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories: (a) no children, no partner; (b) partner, but no biological children; (c) only nonresidential biological children, most of whom (90%) do not have a partner in each cohort; (d) residential biological children, but no partner (single fathers); and (e) residential biological children and a partner (a few of whom also have nonresidential children, about 15% in the earlier cohort and 8% in the later cohort).

Independent variables—We use parallel variables indicating the young men's current statuses. The age of the young adults in 1985 and 2004, schooling attained, and whether employed since the last interview were also included as controls for current characteristics. Probably because increases in educational attainment in the population are offset by being born to younger mothers, the educational levels of the later cohort are almost the same as those of the earlier cohort. The weighted means for these variables for the total sample are presented in Table 1.

Background information for the earlier cohort was collected only at the first interview in 1979; we had similar information for the later cohort, but it was possible to average values for such items as family income, the education of the residential father, the mother's work hours, and family structure across multiple survey years during childhood and up to age 14 to obtain a better picture of lifetime experience. The proportion of years in the South was calculated from birth to age 14 for the later generation and assigned based on residence when the respondent was 14 for the earlier cohort. We also included Hispanic and Black race/ethnicity (vs. White and Other) and the age of the young adult's mother when she had her first child.

Paternal characteristics are defined as characteristics of the residential father, either the biological or the married or unmarried stepfather. A dummy variable (1, 0) is included for whether the residential father was ever a stepfather when the child was 10 to 14 for the later cohort; for the earlier cohort we used whether he lived with a stepfather at age 14, reported in 1979. If no father was present during age 10 to 14 (or in 1979 for the earlier cohort), youth were coded as living with a single mother. The omitted category is “always lived with two parents age 10 to 14 (later generation)” or “lived with two parents at age 14 (earlier cohort).”¹

Interestingly, despite the disadvantages of these 20- to 26-year-old young men in the later cohort, on many dimensions they have more favorable characteristics than the earlier cohort. Yes, their mothers began childbearing at younger ages, and they are much more likely to have grown up outside a two-biological-parent family. They are also more likely to be an ethnic/racial minority and to have lived a longer proportion of their years in the South. Some of these differences, such as the fact that they are much more likely to have an employed mother, reflect historical trends. In terms of favorable characteristics, they themselves are more likely to be employed, despite the fact that they are also more likely to be enrolled in school (data not presented). Their parents are more educated and earned more money (in 2004 U.S. dollars), and they had fewer siblings among whom to share that income.

Analysis Plan

We analyze father–partner types for these two cohorts using descriptive tables and multinomial logistic regression. The multinomial logistic regression model allows for simultaneous estimation of polytomous outcomes (Maddala, 1983). The dependent variable has five categories, as described above, with “no children, no partner” as the omitted category. We analyzed the 1985 and 2004 results separately but then pooled the two files to test for hypothesized differences between cohorts through interacting family structure variables with the cohort dummy.

Results

Father–Partner Status Change Across Time

Table 2 shows the distribution of father–partner statuses for the earlier and later cohorts, by age. We present results for the total and for ages 20 to 23 and 24 to 26. Because of the uneven number of years, the ages could not be split into two equal groups. Instead, the categories shown are based on statistics indicating a median age at first marriage of 27.1 for men and 25.3 for women in 2003 (Fields, 2004). Age 24 to 26 represents the group at greatest risk of first marriage and birth in our study (Fields, 2004).

In 1985, most of the young men aged 20 to 26 had neither a partner nor children (61.3%). Most of the rest were evenly balanced between having both a partner and children (16.0%) or just a partner (16.2%). Very few were nonresident fathers (6.1%), and almost none were single fathers (less than 1%). In some ways there was relatively little change in the nearly two decades between the two cohorts; in other ways the changes were great. Although both cohorts had about the same percentage that had neither a partner nor children when they were observed (about 60%), this reflects the somewhat younger average age of the more recent cohort. Differences are somewhat larger for the two age subgroups: those aged 20 to 23 and 24 to 26, with 6 to 7 percentage points more having attained at least one of these family roles in the later cohort at each age.

¹We ran the models replicating the family structure variables at age 14 instead of across ages 10 to 14. This reduced the sample size without altering the findings, so we show the results only for structure from ages 10 to 14.

Among those who had attained the specific adult family roles of parent and/or partner, the two cohorts' distributions were less similar, primarily reflecting the increase in parenthood outside a residential partnership between the mid-1980s and the mid-2000s. Although the two partnered categories showed relatively little change, the categories of residential fathers without partners and fathers with nonresidential children increased substantially. Single fathers had the largest proportionate gain, but from a much smaller base. Whereas less than 1% of young men in the earlier cohort reported living with children but no partner in 1985 (0.5%), this had increased to 1.3% by 2004. The increase in reported nonresidential fatherhood was proportionately less, but substantively more dramatic, increasing from 6.1% in 1985 to 10.9% in 2004. This increase was particularly large among men aged 24 to 26. Nearly a fifth of men aged 24 to 26 in the later cohort reported having children they did not live with (17.6%) compared with only 7.2% among those in the earlier cohort of this age. This implies that a different life course pattern has emerged between these two cohorts. In the earlier cohort, there was little increase in nonresidential fatherhood between the early 20s and the mid-20s, which suggests that it was disproportionately a characteristic of the very young. Proportions for the later cohort, in contrast, more than doubled between the early and mid-20s.

In the following section, we examine what factors contributed to men's occupying different parent and partner statuses. Do changes between cohorts reflect relatively constant effects of the changing backgrounds and family structures of these young adults, or have the effects of some of these factors changed?

Multivariate Results

In Table 3, the columns represent the father–partner types. The first two columns for each year represent the more normative pattern of family formation, that is, those who are in a partnership, distinguishing men who do not yet have children from those who do. The second two columns represent the new types of fatherhood increasingly found among American men: those who do not live with their children and those who live with their children but not a partner. The omitted (comparison) group represents those living neither with children nor with a partner.

We showed earlier (Table 2) that the majority of young men in each cohort were not living with either a partner or children. Hence, all those with a partner, but especially those with children, had begun family formation early. This is often linked with more disadvantaged background characteristics as well as more negative outcomes for both the young men and their new families. Although we cannot observe outcomes, our analysis sheds substantial light on the factors leading to early family role attainment among these young men.

Factors common to all partner/parent types for each cohort—Common to most father–partner categories are the effects of age, education, employment, mother's age at first birth, and family income, although in most cases the results are weakest for the single-father category. There were too few single fathers in the earlier cohort to achieve many significant results. Older young adults were significantly more likely to have transitioned to one of these roles, with fairly similar coefficients. The more the educational attainment, the less likely they were to be parents and/or partners. In part, of course, this reflects the shorter time since school was completed, given that age is controlled. Employed men at these ages were also more likely to have taken a partner and attained residential parenthood in both time periods.

As expected, men whose mothers had their first child at a later age were less likely to hold each of these family role configurations. The greater the family income when they were growing up, the less likely they were to have started a family by these ages, although the

effects are significant only for having nonresident children (1985) and living with both a partner and children (2004). This supports our expectation that men who take on the responsibilities of both a partner and children at such an early age may have been as disadvantaged growing up as those who become nonresidential fathers.

Several of the predictor variables had no impact on any of the separate parent–partner categories. With fathers' characteristics included in the model, most of those variables specific to mothers were insignificant. Mothers' education had no significant effect; neither did mothers' employment. The number of siblings was never significantly associated with father–partner type. The remaining predictors had their primary impacts on only one or two father–partner types, or one cohort, which we discuss below separately for each type.

Factors primarily affecting living with a partner but no children—In addition to the factors discussed above that were consistently linked to having a partner or being a father, the effects of race on having a partner but no children were strong for each cohort. Not only were Black men less likely than White men to be in childless couples, but this was also the case for Hispanic men, a result that was significant at conventional levels in the pooled analysis (not shown).

Factors common to living with a partner and a child—As with being in a partnership without children, Black men were significantly less likely to be in a partnership with children than were White men. This suggests that parenthood does not lead to partnerships among Black men. As we will see below, it is not that Black men are more likely to have children at a young age; they simply are less likely to raise children in traditional structures. As we expected, men who grew up in the South were more likely to be living with a partner and child than those who grew up in other regions, but this result characterized only the earlier cohort.

Factors primarily affecting being a nonresidential biological father—The problematic nature of nonresidential fatherhood is reinforced by these results. Low educational attainment increased the likelihood of being a nonresidential father. Reflecting the greater experience of family and community disorganization, young Black men are not only less likely to be residential biological fathers than to remain childless, relative to young White men, but also in both cohorts they are much more likely to be non-residential fathers than to be partnerless and childless. The only other factor that distinguishes this group is region, although only among the later cohort. In the later cohort, young men who grew up in the South were less likely to be nonresidential fathers, a finding that appears to be a reversal from the earlier cohort.

Residential single fathers—It is clear that the southern region remains a more conservative part of the country vis-à-vis family change, reinforcing the newness of both nonresidential fatherhood and single residential fatherhood. Growing up in the South had an even stronger effect on decreasing residential single fatherhood for the later cohort than it did on nonresidential single fatherhood for both cohorts. Some indicators even put a positive light on the determinants of being a residential father in early adulthood. Unlike the other role combinations, having a more educated father increased, not decreased, a young man's likelihood of being a single father for the later cohort, with each year of paternal education increasing the odds by about a third (exponent of .316). Being a single father means accepting and taking responsibility for one's children; greater responsibility is associated with growing up in a family with a father who had relatively more education.

In sum, the results suggest that for each cohort, greater family resources—education and income while the youth is growing up—are associated with greater responsibility in terms of

postponing childbearing until the youth is able to provide for a family. Youth growing up in a family with greater family income and with a father with more education are significantly less likely to be nonresidential fathers. Clearly, growing up poor continues to have long-term negative effects on young men as they begin fathering children and forming partnerships. Parental education also has a separate and important effect. If something happens to their partner relationship, young men from families with better educated parents are more likely to rear their own children.

Change Over Time

Have these effects changed over the nearly 20-year period since 1985, when young men who were born in the late 1950s and early 1960s were coming of age? Most effects, and particularly those of family socioeconomic status, are quite similar, but not all. Cohort differences are not shown directly but indicated by shading in Table 3.

The effects of childhood family structure (the presence of a stepfather or a single mother) weakened substantially between the two cohorts. For the earlier cohort, those who had a stepfather were significantly more likely to become nonresidential fathers than those without this experience. The coefficient of .586 translates into an odds ratio of 1.8, a large effect. This effect had become negative (although nonsignificant) for the later cohort. In contrast, young men with stepfathers in the earlier cohort were significantly less likely to be residential single fathers than those with two biological parents, but this effect was no longer significant for the later cohort. Those raised by a single mother in the earlier cohort were less likely to have a partner and children and more likely to have nonresidential biological children; these effects were not significant for the later cohort. Basically, young men raised by single mothers have a more normal progression into fatherhood than they did in the past. We predicted that the effects of childhood family structure would attenuate. On paternal coresidence and partnership, at least, this seems to be the case.

In contrast, the effect of mother's age at first birth appears to have increased from the earlier to the later cohort. Having a mother who is 1 year older at first birth had a larger effect on lowering the early transition to fatherhood in the recent than in the earlier cohort. This is consistent with other research that shows as the age at first birth of mothers rises, those children born to the youngest mothers are increasingly disadvantaged (Hofferth, Reid, & Mott, 2001).

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings presented here substantially support the three hypotheses. In the early cohort, young men who lived with a single mother or a stepfather were more likely to transition to early nonresidential fatherhood than those who lived with two biological parents. The hypothesis that young men from socioeconomically disadvantaged families will be more likely than those from advantaged families to transition into a partnership and into parenthood early was supported across both cohorts. The specific hypothesis that nonresidential parenthood would be discouraged by greater family income while growing up was supported more strongly in the early cohort, but in both cohorts the effects of family income on early transitions were in the negative direction. Finally, our hypothesis that the effect of family structure will have attenuated across the cohorts was supported.

This article is the first to show both a strong effect of family structure on young men's entry into family roles during the early years of the divorce revolution and its attenuation a generation later. Among those attaining family roles in the early 1980s, sons who grew up in a single-mother or stepfather family who became fathers primarily did so outside a residential relationship, likely modeling the family they had experienced. Only 20 years

later, their sons were neither more nor less likely to be nonresidential fathers than those who grew up with two biological parents. This suggests that for them, much of the growth in nonresident fatherhood did not result from the growth in childhood disruption, but rather from increased non-resident fatherhood among those growing up with two parents.

Furthermore, we were able to identify characteristics of those who had taken on partner and/or parent roles and, for those who were parents, whether they lived with their children or not. For each cohort, younger age delayed the assumption of these roles, as did mother's older age at first birth. Socioeconomic disadvantage was associated with accelerated transitions to fatherhood, with the most disadvantaged both more likely to have children and to have only nonresidential children. Finally, we saw interesting distinctions between men who became resident fathers and those who had only nonresident biological children. Young Black men were much more likely to have biological children and not live with them than young White men. Disadvantage in the parental home when growing up is reproduced to some extent in the children's family formation patterns.

These results have several limitations. Many of the young men in this study had not yet taken on family roles as partners and/or fathers. This is less likely to produce biased results on this dimension, as other research suggests that the effects of family structure are strongest for the youngest fathers (Goldscheider, Hofferth, & Curtin, 2007). The Young Adult Study is not and was not intended to be a nationally representative sample of young men. Finally, it is not clear what the pathways are that link childhood family structure and adult family roles. In later work, we hope to further examine these pathways to adulthood.

In conclusion, this study finds that socioeconomic factors and the youth's own educational pathways remain the major factors influencing the early transitions to adulthood. The influence of early family structure has apparently attenuated across the cohorts studied here. More research is needed to confirm these findings with more representative samples of young men. However, our findings of cohort change in the effects of family structure are robust to the inclusion of a large number of potential confounding factors, including family socioeconomic background, family size, and mothers' age at first birth as well as the respondents' own education. Probably the most important conclusion is that the economic circumstances in which young men grow up still play a very important role in their family formation trajectories. Greater family income is protective against nonresidential fatherhood; the latter is probably the most costly outcome for young men, young women, and their children.

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Table 1

Means for Independent Variables for Each Cohort (Weighted)

Independent Variable	1985		2004	
	Mean/Proportion	SD ^d	Mean/Proportion	SD ^d
Current characteristics				
Age of young adult	23.2	2.0	22.4	1.8
High school graduate	45.3	—	46.2	—
College+	38.8	—	38.3	—
Employed	70.1	—	91.3	—
Socioeconomic background measures				
Mother's education, young adult 10-14 or year of survey ^a	11.7	2.6	12.1	1.9
Number of siblings (+ respondent) at age 10-14 or year of survey ^a	3.2	2.3	2.5	1.1
Mother's age at first birth ^{a,b}	21.5	3.6	19.6	2.6
Average family income (in thousands), age 0-14 or year of survey ^{a,c}	36.7	21.7	40.3	28.0
Mother employed part-time, age 0-14 or year of survey ^a	21.0	—	57.3	—
Mother employed full-time, age 0-14 or year of survey ^a	42.0	—	32.6	—
Mother not employed, age 0-14 or year of survey ^a	37.0	—	10.1	—
Average of mother's spouse's education, age 0-14 or year of survey ^a	11.7	3.4	12.2	1.9
Childhood family structure				
Single mother	14.2	—	29.0	—
Stepfather	6.9	—	16.3	—
Demographic characteristics				
Hispanic	6.2	—	9.0	—
Black	13.6	—	19.1	—
Proportion years lived in the South, age 0-14 or year of survey ^a	0.30	0.5	0.38	0.5
N (unweighted)	3,683		1,009	

^aMissing data were imputed using means.^bFor the 1979 cohort, mother's age at first birth was calculated from her age and the age of the respondent's oldest sibling.^cIn 2004 U.S. dollars.^dStandard deviations are not provided for proportions.

Table 2

Father-Partner Types by Age and Cohort, 1985 and 2004 (Weighted)

Father-Partner Type (%)	Age in 1985 ^a			Age in 2004 ^b		
	Total	20-23	24-26	Total	20-23	24-26
No children, no partner	61.3	73.6	46.5	58.3	66.2	40.6
Partner, no biological children	16.2	11.7	21.6	15.3	14.8	16.6
Nonresidential biological children only	6.1	5.1	7.2	10.9	7.9	17.6
Single parent	0.5	0.4	0.6	1.3	1.5	1.0
Residential biological children and partner	16.0	9.2	24.1	14.1	9.7	24.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N (unweighted)	3,683	2,118	1,565	1,009	691	318

Source: NLSY79, Wave Year: 1985; NLSY-Child/Young Adult, Wave Year: 2004.

^aMen of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79).

^bSons of the women of the NLSY79.

Table 3

Coefficients for Models of Father-Partner Type, 1985 and 2004^a (Multinomial Logistic Regression)

Independent Variable	1985				2004			
	Partner, No Bio Children	Live With Bio Children + Partner	Only Nonresident Bio Children	Single Father	Partner, No Bio Children	Live With Bio Children + Partner	Only Nonresident Bio Children	Single Father
(Omitted category for each regression = no partner, no children)								
Current characteristics								
Age of young adult	0.313 *	0.473 *	0.313 *	0.358 *	0.147 *	0.417 *	0.347 *	0.181
High school graduate	-0.424 *	-0.739 *	-0.489 *	-0.135	0.185	-0.850 *	-1.150 *	-0.749
College+	-0.802 *	-2.152 *	-1.719 *	-1.498 **	-0.301	-2.089 *	-2.177 *	-3.773 *
Employed	0.628 *	0.977 *	0.232	-0.827	0.801	0.546	-0.081	0.840
Mother's education, 10-14	0.025	-0.033	0.014	-0.111	0.028	0.068	0.038	-0.043
Number of siblings, 10-14	0.007	0.009	-0.002	0.040	0.121	-0.061	-0.106	0.126
Mother's age at first birth	-0.071 *	-0.042 *	-0.072 *	-0.062 *	-0.122 *	-0.245 *	-0.349 *	-0.375 **
Average family income	-0.004	-0.007	-0.018 **	-0.041	-0.017	-0.151 *	-0.010	-0.193
Mother worked part-time	0.186	0.151	-0.081	0.465	0.573	0.340	0.067	0.514
Mother worked full-time	-0.059	-0.082	-0.036	0.502	0.580	0.468	0.525	0.936
Mother's spouse's education	0.006	-0.020	-0.030	0.123	-0.085	-0.078	-0.148	0.316 *
Single mother	-0.094	-0.406 *	0.416 *	-1.047 *	0.433	0.291	-0.344	-0.636
Stepfather	0.185	0.088	0.586 *	-1.965 **	0.315	0.568 **	-0.278	0.433
Hispanic	-0.338 **	0.198	0.338	0.663	-0.501	-0.294	-0.009	0.222
Black	-1.146 *	-0.492 *	1.063 *	0.638	-1.083 *	-1.153 *	1.128 *	0.087
Lived in the South	0.234 **	0.244 **	0.277 **	-0.319	0.203	-0.636 *	-0.586 *	-1.370 **
Intercept	-7.280 *	-10.536 *	-7.470 *	-10.602 *	-3.024	-4.839 **	-0.158	-3.490
Log likelihood ^b	-3,441.5		-4,463.6					-985.3

^a Shading indicates that 2004 is significantly different from 1985, in a run that included all interactions.

b Pseudo log likelihood for separate years and the pooled interaction run (in the center).

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .10$, two-tailed test.