DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH
A peer-reviewed, open-access journal of population sciences

DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

VOLUME 53, ARTICLE 9, PAGES 245–260
PUBLISHED 8 AUGUST 2025
https://www.demographic-research.org/Volumes/Vol53/9
DOI: 10.4054/DemRes.2025.53.9

Descriptive Finding

Where do we go from here? Partnership-parenthood trajectories of cohabitation as first union during young adulthood in the United States

Wenxuan Huang

Jessica A. Kelley

Contents

Demographic Research: Volume 53, Article 9
Descriptive Finding

Where do we go from here? Partnership-parenthood trajectories of cohabitation as first union during young adulthood in the United States

Wenxuan Huang[1]

Jessica A. Kelley[2]

Abstract

BACKGROUND
There has been considerable discussion about the role of cohabitation in family formation since the rise of cohabitation trends in Western societies. However, empirical evidence on how cohabitation-initiated partnership-parenthood trajectories unfold within specific cohorts remains limited.

OBJECTIVE
This study aims to identify typical partnership-parenthood trajectories following cohabitation as a first union in young adulthood and to examine how the likelihood of entering each trajectory varies by sociodemographic characteristics.

METHODS
We used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97) to construct 60-month partnership-parenthood sequences after cohabitation as a first union. We applied sequence analysis and cluster analysis to identify typical patterns and estimated multinomial logistic regression models to examine the associations between sociodemographic characteristics and cluster membership.

RESULTS
We identified six typical partnership-parenthood trajectories among young cohabiters. College-educated cohabiters were more likely to enter the marriage-bound trajectory with delayed childbearing. Racial/ethnic minorities were less likely to enter trajectories involving eventual marriage and were overrepresented in trajectories characterized by non-marital birth and relationship instability.

[1] Hopkins Population Center, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA. Email: whuang60@jhu.edu.
[2] Department of Sociology, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, USA.

CONCLUSIONS
Our findings show that there is no single dominant partnership-parenthood pattern, indicating that cohabitation remains a liminal space between singlehood and marriage for the NLSY97 cohort. Sociodemographic differences are more pronounced in entry into certain trajectories than into others.

CONTRIBUTIONS
This study advances understanding of cohabitation's role in family formation by offering a nuanced description of temporal patterns in partnership-parenthood trajectories. It also provides novel evidence for the "diverging destinies" thesis, highlighting how social inequality shapes early family formation.

1. Introduction

Family formation processes in the United States have undergone substantial transformation over the past few decades. Since the 1970s, the average age at first marriage and first-time parenthood has steadily increased (Guzzo and Payne 2018). Cohabitation has surpassed marriage to become the most common partnership experience during young adulthood (Sassler and Miller 2017). Moreover, children born in cohabiting unions contribute to a growing share of total non-marital births (Solomon-Fears 2014). These shifts have diversified the family formation process, which was predominantly organized around marriage for much of the twentieth century (Manning 2020; Sassler and Lichter 2020). Despite the increasing prevalence of cohabitation in young adulthood, empirical evidence regarding the role of cohabitation in the family formation process within specific cohorts remains limited, particularly in terms of holistic partnership-parenthood trajectories.

Conceptual work has proposed several possible interpretations regarding the role cohabitation may play in the family formation process (Heuveline and Timberlake 2004; Hiekel, Liefbroer, and Poortman 2014). First, cohabitation is viewed as a prelude to marriage, reflecting the increasing prevalence of the cohabitation-to-marriage pathway (Kuperberg 2019). Individuals who follow this sequence typically express positive attitudes toward marriage and prefer to have children within marital unions. Second, cohabitation may function as an alternative to marriage, signaling the ongoing deinstitutionalization of marriage in recent decades (Cherlin 2020). As the "second demographic transition" theory posits, traditional marital norms are incompatible with individualistic values emphasizing personal autonomy and gender equality (Zaidi and Morgan 2017). The diffusion of these individualistic values is likely to contribute to the rise of cohabitation as a long-term arrangement for both relationships and childbearing

(Heuveline and Timberlake 2004). A third interpretation centers on cohabitation as an alternative to singlehood, given striking similarities between cohabiters and unpartnered individuals in terms of fertility expectations, continued parental dependency, and lack of homeownership (Rindfuss and VandenHeuvel 1990).

All three interpretations have some support in the literature, largely due to the varying reasons for and utility of cohabitation across socioeconomic status. In the US context, the "diverging destinies" thesis highlights growing disparities in partnership and parenthood outcomes in the family formation process across socioeconomic positions (McLanahan 2004, 2009). For instance, the pathway from cohabitation to marriage before parenthood remains dominant among college-educated cohabiters (Lamidi, Manning, and Brown 2019), while cohabitation often serves as a way to share resources in working-class couples with lower expectations of marriage as the outcome (Sassler and Miller 2011). In addition to these socioeconomic patterns, racial/ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented in nontraditional partnership-parenthood pathways, often characterized by partnership instability and higher rates of non-marital births (Raley, Sweeney, and Wondra 2015). As cohabitation continues to challenge traditional marriage norms, it is crucial to understand how family inequality manifests in emerging family formation patterns shaped by cohabitation.

To date, much of our knowledge about the role of cohabitation in young adulthood has been based on period estimates or event history analysis focused on discrete measurements, such as average age at first marriage or the cohabitation-to-marriage rate. While methods relying on point-in-time measures provide valuable insights into overall trends, they are less ideal for capturing the complexity of the dynamic family life course, which involves multiple state changes unfolding at varying time points. To address these research gaps, we leverage detailed event history data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97) to examine 60-month partnership-parenthood sequences following cohabitation as the first unions in heterosexual partnerships. We then examine how typical partnership-parenthood trajectories vary across sociodemographic groups to better understand how social inequality may translate into family inequality in the context of cohabitation.

2. Data and methods

2.1 Data and sample

We used data from the NLSY97, a nationally representative study that follows 8,984 respondents born between 1980 and 1984. During study rounds 1 to 8, cohabitation was initially defined as a "marriage-like relationship in which partners of the opposite sex live

together." The term *opposite sex* was removed in subsequent rounds. Due to this inconsistency in data collection, our study focuses only on opposite-sex partnerships. Considering that cohabiting unions rarely last more than five years (Copen, Daniels, and Mosher 2013), we chose a 60-month time window to construct partnership-parenthood sequences, following a similar approach used by Di Giulio, Impicciatore, and Sironi (2019).

Since this study focuses on cohabitation as the first union in the family formation process, we excluded respondents who did not form a cohabiting union during the time they were observed (n = 2,720) and those whose first cohabiting union occurred after their first marriage (n = 289). Additionally, the following exclusion criteria were applied: (1) partnership-parenthood trajectories that were right censored before the 60th month (n = 368), (2) respondents with any missing partnership-parenthood status in the 60-month sequences (n = 30), (3) any reported union with a same-sex partner (n = 298). The final analytic sample consisted of 5,279 respondents whose first union was a cohabitation.

2.2 Measurement

To construct partnership sequences, we utilized detailed monthly event history variables documenting marital and cohabitation statuses available from the month a respondent turned 14 years old. The partnership status was categorized into three states: (1) cohabiting, (2) married, and (3) single. Respondents were classified as cohabiting if they reported cohabiting with a partner in a non-marital union. Single status denoted the absence of a partner resulting from the dissolution of a cohabiting or marital union (due to legal separation, divorce, or widowhood). The parenthood status was dummy coded as parent (1) or non-parent (0). We then combined partnership and parenthood statuses to identify six unique states: (1) cohabiting, non-parent, (2) cohabiting, parent, (3) married, non-parent, (4) married, parent, (5) single, non-parent, (6) single, parent.

We included three sets of covariates in the multinomial logistic regression analysis: (1) demographic indicators, (2) socioeconomic characteristics, (3) life course factors. The demographic indicators were gender, race/ethnicity (non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and mixed race) and age at first cohabitation. We included the socioeconomic characteristic of the respondents and their families of origin. A respondent's education was measured as the highest level reported at their most recent interview: (1) less than high school, (2) high school/GED, (3) some college, (4) bachelor's degree or above. Parental education was coded using the same four categories. We also included a measure indicating whether the respondent lived with both biological parents during adolescence. The life course factors included school enrollment status and employment status during the six months preceding the first cohabitation.

2.3 Analytic strategy

The analysis proceeded in two stages. First we conducted a cluster analysis to determine the optimal number of groups representing typical patterns in the 60-month partnership-parenthood sequences following cohabitation as the first union. This stage involved two steps. In the first step we calculated a pairwise dissimilarity matrix using a selected distance measure. In the optimal matching framework, a dissimilarity measure summarizes the minimal costs of transforming one sequence into another through two operations: substitution and insertion/deletion. In this study, we used the edit distance measure OMstran (optimal matching of transitions) to compute a 5,279 by 5,279 pairwise dissimilarity matrix. This distance measure was selected for its sensitivity to multiple temporal dimensions (e.g., timing, duration, and order), which are critical to understanding the succession of events in the family formation process (Studer and Ritschard 2016).

We then conducted a cluster analysis on the computed dissimilarity matrix using the partitioning around the medoids (PAM) algorithm, which searches for the best representative medoids in the data (Studer 2013). We referred to the quality criterion average silhouette width (ASW) to determine the optimal number of clusters. A higher value of ASW indicates greater between-cluster heterogeneity and within-cluster homogeneity. The six-cluster solution produced the highest ASW (0.48) among the alternatives. Accordingly, we identified six typical patterns that best describe 60-month partnership-parenthood sequences following cohabitation as a first union (Figure 1). We present their characteristics in Tables 1 and 2. We used R packages TraMineR (Gabadinho et al. 2011) and WeightedCluster (Studer 2013) to conduct these two steps. In the second stage, we estimated multinomial logistic regression models to examine the associations between the three sets of covariates and the partnership-parenthood cluster membership. To facilitate interpretation, we plotted predicted probabilities of the cluster membership by respondent's education and race/ethnicity (Figures 2 and 3).

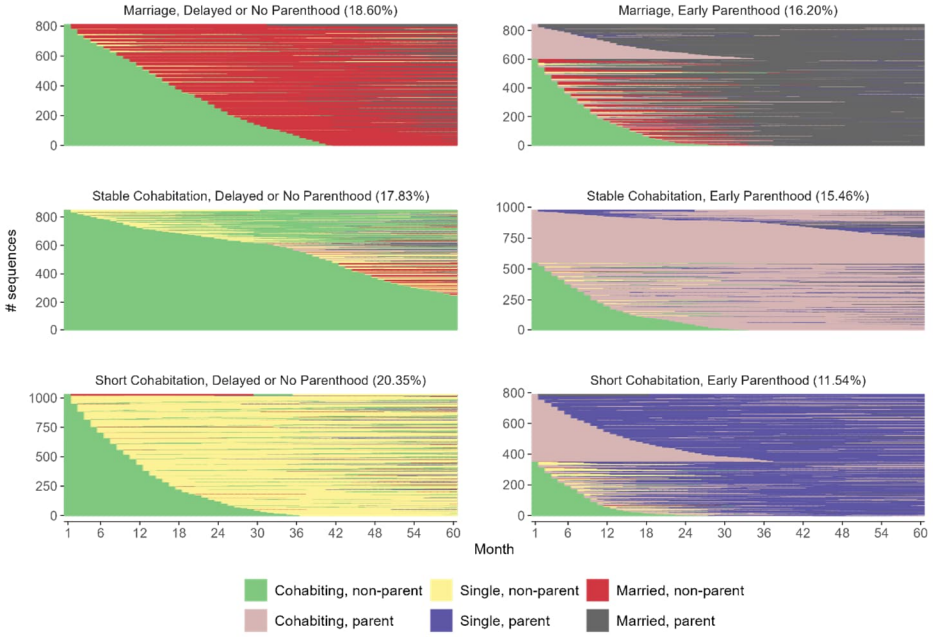
3. Results

3.1 Typology of partnership-parenthood trajectories

Figure 1 displays sequence index plots for the six identified clusters. Tables 1 and 2 present summary statistics with 95% intervals for partnership and parenthood characteristics. For the total sample (Panel A in Table 1), the average length of the first cohabitation was 24.20 (CI: 23.46–27.76) months. A little over one-third (35.74%, CI: 34.33%–37.18%) of first cohabiting unions transitioned into marriage, while more than

half (51.25%, CI: 49.79%–52.73%) of them ended in dissolution. About a quarter (23.53%, CI: 23.53%–24.81%) of cohabiters formed a second cohabiting union within the 60-month observation window. In terms of parenthood characteristics (Panel A in Table 2), 15.72% (CI: 14.76%–16.74%) of cohabiters entered the first cohabiting union as parents. By the 60th month, 55.51% (CI: 54.05%–56.78%) of cohabiters had at least one child and 25.04% (CI: 23.84%–26.28%) had two or more children.

Figure 1: Sequence index plot of partnership-parenthood trajectories by cluster membership



The first two clusters (Figure 1, row 1) are characterized by a predominant transition into marriage with the first cohabiting partner by the 60th month and are therefore referred to as marriage-prone trajectories. The first cluster, "marriage, delayed or no parenthood" (18.60%, CI: 17.43%–19.83%), consisted of cohabiters who transitioned to marriage relatively soon after the first cohabitation. The average duration of the first cohabitation was 19.09 (CI: 18.31–19.88) months. Respondents entered the first cohabitation as non-parents, and only 35.83% (CI: 32.47%–39.34%) had become parents and just 1.89% had two or more children by the 60th month. Members of the second cluster, "marriage, early

parenthood" (16.20%, CI: 15.14%–17.31%) entered marriage at a faster pace, with an average duration of 13.54 (CI: 12.87–14.22) months for the first cohabitation. About a quarter (24.24%, CI: 21.33%–27.42%) of members in this cluster entered the first cohabiting union as parents, and all of them had become parents by the 60th month. Compared to those in the first cluster, a significantly higher proportion (62.39%, CI: 58.77%–65.88%) of members in this cluster had two or more children.

Table 1: Partnership characteristics by cluster membership (n = 5,279)

Panel A	Length of first cohabitation (months) [a]	First cohabitation → marriage (%)	First cohabitation → singlehood (%)	Married within 60 months [b] (%)	Ever entered a second cohabiting union [c] (%)
Total	24.20 (23.64–24.76)	35.74 (34.33–37.18)	51.25 (49.79–52.73)	45.89 (44.42–47.36)	23.53 (22.31–24.81)
Panel B					
Marriage, delayed or no parenthood	19.09 (18.31–19.88)	88.26 (85.77–90.36)	11.74 (9.64–14.22)	100.00 n/a	7.44 (5.78–9.55)
Marriage, early parenthood	13.54 (12.87–14.22)	82.29 (79.36–84.87)	17.71 (15.12–20.64)	100.00 n/a	14.49 (12.07–17.29)
Stable cohabitation, delayed or no parenthood	42.24 (40.88–43.60)	18.62 (15.97–21.61)	47.89 (44.34–51.45)	26.28 (23.23–29.59)	26.61 (23.56–29.90)
Stable cohabitation, early parenthood	43.69 (42.24–45.14)	11.14 (9.10–13.58)	43.43 (39.98–46.95)	15.49 (13.07–18.27)	24.08 (21.15–27.29)
Short cohabitation, delayed or no parenthood	12.47 (11.91–13.03)	2.44 (1.59–3.73)	97.55 (96.27–98.41)	12.54 (10.49–15.49)	37.17 (34.05–40.41)
Short cohabitation, early parenthood	14.09 (13.29–14.89)	3.91 (2.59–5.88)	96.09 (94.12–97.41)	12.52 (10.06–15.48)	32.61 (28.96–36.47)

Note: Baseline sampling weight was adjusted in calculating the measures presented in the table.
[a]. The length of the first cohabitation was calculated as the number of months between the first cohabitation and the first transition – i.e., dissolution or marriage. The length of the first cohabitation was treated as 60 months if there was no transition within 60 months.
[b]. This measure indicates whether a cohabiter entered a marriage regardless of whether it was with the first cohabiting partner.
[c]. The second cohabiting union could occur either after the dissolution of the first cohabiting union or after marriage.

Table 2: Parenthood characteristics by cluster membership (n = 5,279)

Panel A	Parent when entering first cohabitation (%)	Had any child by the 60th month (%)	Had two or more children by the 60th month (%)
Total	15.72 (14.76–16.74)	55.51 (54.05–56.78)	25.04 (23.84–26.28)
Panel B			
Marriage, delayed or no parenthood	0.00 n/a	35.83 (32.47–39.34)	1.89 (1.12–3.18)
Marriage, early parenthood	24.24 (21.33–27.42)	100.00 n/a	62.39 (58.77–65.88)
Stable cohabitation, delayed or no parenthood	0.00 n/a	17.26 (14.76–20.09)	1.49 (0.87–2.54)
Stable cohabitation, early parenthood	39.35 (36.02–42.78)	100.00 n/a	54.10 (50.58–57.58)
Short cohabitation, delayed or no parenthood	0.00 n/a	12.59 (10.62–14.86)	1.75 (1.09–2.78)
Short cohabitation, early parenthood	49.49 (45.60–53.52)	100.00 n/a	48.48 (44.57–52.41)

Notes: Baseline sampling weight was adjusted in calculating the measures presented in the table. The denominators are the number of respondents in the total sample and in each cluster.

The two clusters in the second row of Figure 1 were characterized by the prolonged duration of the first cohabitation and are therefore referred to as stable cohabitation. The "stable cohabitation, delayed or no parenthood" cluster (17.83%, CI: 16.72% –19.01%) exhibited lower rates of transition to marriage compared to the first two clusters, with only 18.62% (CI: 15.97%–21.61) of the first cohabiting unions resulting in marriage. Entering the first cohabiting unions as non-parents, only 17.26% (CI: 14.76%–20.09%) of members in this cluster had become parents by the 60th month. The "stable cohabitation, early parenthood" cluster (15.46%, CI: 14.48%–16.50%) resembled the "marriage, early parenthood" cluster in childbearing behaviors. About 40% of cohabiters in this cluster were parents at the entry into first cohabitation, and they all had become parents at the 60th month, with more than half of them having two or more children. The patterns of rapid transition to parenthood and having multiple children are referred to as fertility-inclined.

The first cohabiting unions in the last two clusters (Figure 1, row 3) were short-lived, with an average length of slightly over a year. For the "short cohabitation, delayed or no parenthood" cluster (20.35%, CI: 19.19% –21.58%), the vast majority of the first cohabiting unions ended in singlehood (97.55%, CI: 96.27%–98.41%) within a short period of time: 12.47 (CI: 11.91–13.03) months on average. Cohabiters entering this trajectory had the highest likelihood of entering a second cohabiting union (37.17%, CI: 34.05%–40.41%) and the lowest likelihood of becoming parents (12.59%, CI: 10.62%–14.86%) by the 60th month. The last cluster, "short cohabitation, early parenthood" (11.54%, CI: 10.70%–12.44%), shared similar partnership characteristics with the fifth cluster but diverged significantly in childbearing patterns. Nearly half (49.49%, CI:

45.60%–53.52%) of cohabiters in this cluster entered the first cohabitation as parents, and they all became parents. They had a comparable share (48.48%, CI: 44.57%–52.41%) of higher-order births compared to the other two fertility-inclined trajectories.

3.2 Sociodemographic differences in partnership-parenthood trajectories

There was a clear educational gradient in the likelihood of entering the "marriage, delayed or no parenthood" trajectory, with higher levels of education observed at the last interview associated with a higher predicted probability (Figure 2). However, cohabiters with a college degree were less likely to enter the other marriage-prone trajectory ("marriage, early parenthood"). Reversed educational gradients in predicted probability of cluster membership were observed for the other two fertility-inclined trajectories that were less linked to marriage. In contrast, educational differences were not salient for the clusters that did not involve parenthood. We also observed significant racial/ethnic differences in several partnership-parenthood trajectories (Figure 3). Black cohabiters were less likely to enter either of the marriage-prone trajectories than their White counterparts. Both Black and Hispanic cohabiters had higher predicted probabilities of entering the "stable cohabitation, early parenthood" trajectory compared to their White counterparts. Similar to educational patterns, the racial/ethnic differences were least pronounced for the short cohabitations without childbearing. Notably, Black cohabiters had the highest probability of entering the "short cohabitation, early parenthood" cluster compared to any other trajectory.

Figure 2: Predicted probability of cluster membership by education

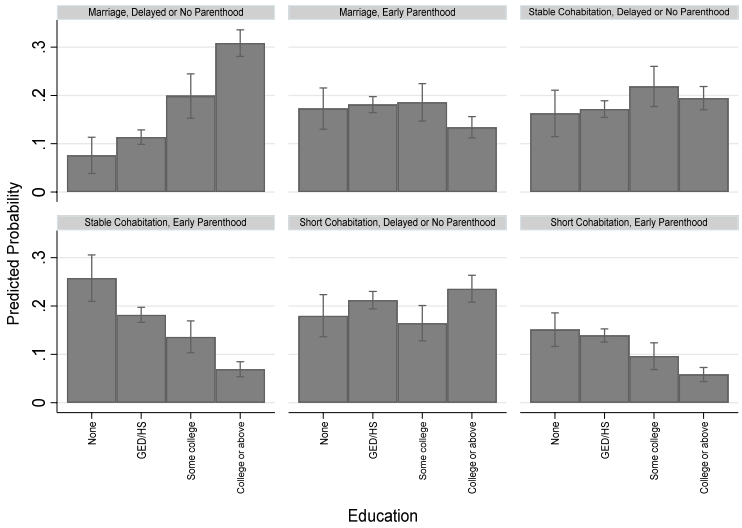
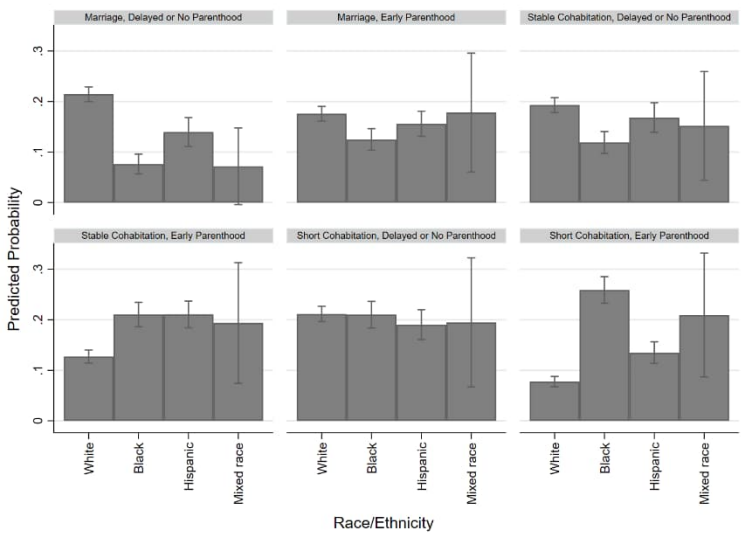


Figure 3: Predicated probability of cluster membership by race/ethnicity



4. Discussion

By examining the partnership-parenthood sequences following cohabitation as the first union among the NLSY97 cohort, we identified six distinct patterns of family formation during young adulthood. The relatively balanced distribution of observations across these patterns suggests that cohabitation remains a liminal space between singlehood and marriage that serves different functions for young cohabiters in this cohort. The two marriage-prone trajectories account for about one-third of the first-time cohabiters, indicating that cohabitation continues to serve as a prelude to marriage for many. However, the prevalence of such trajectories falls notably short of the high marital expectations reported by young adults (Manning, Smock, and Fettro 2019), perhaps indicating a mismatch between expectations upon entering the first cohabitation and the realities of that relationship. Moreover, the contrasting childbearing patterns between these two marriage-prone trajectories may reflect a tension between upholding the continued social benefit of the institution of marriage and embracing the individualized values underlying low fertility.

The two stable cohabitation trajectories, representing about one-third of young cohabiters, highlight the extent to which cohabitation has evolved into an alternative to marriage. Previous conceptual typologies have emphasized childbearing within cohabiting unions as a key indicator of functional similarity between cohabitation and marriage (Heuveline and Timberlake 2004). By this definition, only the "stable cohabitation, early parenthood" trajectory aligns with the ideal type of alternative to marriage. In contrast, stable cohabiting unions without childbearing may reflect a prolonged wait until marriage, contingent on cohabiters' marital intention and other family formation behaviors.

The trajectories characterized by short cohabitation diverge into two distinct patterns based on childbearing behavior. The "short cohabitation, delayed or no parenthood" cluster is minimally associated with marriage or childbearing, illustrating what an alternative to singlehood might entail (Rindfuss and VandenHeuvel 1990). Shorter-term, potentially serial cohabitations may represent a form of intensive dating and often carry very low expectations of permanency (Eickmeyer and Manning 2018). Conversely, trajectories involving early parenthood – possibly accompanied by multi-partnered fertility – present the strongest case for vulnerable family formation. As economic uncertainty continues to expand in subsequent cohorts, cohabitation is likely to serve as an adaptive strategy until marriage becomes affordable (Manning 2020).

The sociodemographic patterns observed in the present study provide supportive evidence for known inequalities in cohabitation outcomes while also revealing greater heterogeneity in partnership-parenthood trajectories than can be captured using single point-in-time measures. For example, we found a clear educational gradient in the

"marriage, delayed or no parenthood" cluster, confirming the "college divide" in the cohabitation–marriage link. College-educated cohabiters are also less likely to enter the two early parenthood trajectories dominated by non-marital birth. Interestingly, college-educated cohabiters were less likely than those with less education to enter "marriage, early parenthood" – a trajectory that resembles the temporal pattern of traditional marriage except for the presence of premarital cohabitation. Few educational differences were observed for the likelihood of entering the "short cohabitation, delayed or no parenthood" trajectory, which is decoupled from both marriage and childbearing.

The findings on racial/ethnic differences in partnership-parenthood patterns are largely consistent with earlier studies documenting an unequal retreat from marriage and non-marital childbearing (Raley, Sweeney, and Wondra 2015). Black young adults were least likely to enter either of the two marriage-prone trajectories but were overrepresented in the fertility-inclined trajectories not linked to marriage. Notably, they exhibited the highest likelihood of entering the "short cohabitation, early parenthood" trajectory among all clusters, a pattern that is most closely tied to long-term economic disadvantage (McLanahan 2009). Another noteworthy pattern is that cohabitation tends to serve as an alternative to marriage among racial minorities, possibly reflecting a failure to reach economic bars for marriage rather a rejection of marriage norms.

In conclusion, this study provides an in-depth view of the partnership and parenthood trajectories of young adults whose first unions are cohabitations. Sequence analysis over a five-year period allows us to capture the key temporal patterns and the sociodemographic characteristics associated with each. Rather than supporting one interpretation of the role of cohabitation in family formation processes for recent cohorts, our findings suggest that cohabitation can represent a range of situations that may be flexibly exercised, depending on young people's socioeconomic positions. Younger cohorts, including those born in the 2000s, are coming of age amid ongoing shifts in family norms, rising economic precarity, and widening political polarization, all of which may further diversify family formation patterns. Further research should examine how the observed patterns for the NLSY97 cohort persist or adapt in subsequent cohorts.

References

Cherlin, A.J. (2020). Degrees of change: An assessment of the deinstitutionalization of marriage thesis. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82(1): 62–80. doi:10.1111/jomf.12605.

Copen, C.E., Daniels, K., and Mosher, W.D. (2013). First premarital cohabitation in the United States: 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth. *National Health Statistics Reports* (64): 1–15, 1 p following 15.

Di Giulio, P., Impicciatore, R., and Sironi, M. (2019). The changing pattern of cohabitation: A Sequence analysis approach. *Demographic Research* 40(42): 1211–1248. doi:10.4054/DemRes.2019.40.42.

Eickmeyer, K.J. and Manning, W.D. (2018). Serial cohabitation in young adulthood: Baby boomers to millennials. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 80(4): 826–840. doi:10.1111/jomf.12495.

Gabadinho, A., Ritschard, G., Müller, N.S., and Studer, M. (2011). Analyzing and visualizing state sequences in *R* with TraMineR. *Journal of Statistical Software* 40(4). doi:10.18637/jss.v040.i04.

Guzzo, K.B. and Payne, K.K. (2018). Average age at first birth, 1970 and 2017. (Family Profiles, FP-18-25). Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family and Marriage Research. doi:10.25035/ncfmr/fp-18-25.

Heuveline, P. and Timberlake, J.M. (2004). The role of cohabitation in family formation: The United States in comparative perspective. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66(5): 1214–1230. doi:10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00088.x.

Hiekel, N., Liefbroer, A.C., and Poortman, A.-R. (2014). Understanding diversity in the meaning of cohabitation across Europe. *European Journal of Population* 30(4): 391–410. doi:10.1007/s10680-014-9321-1.

Kuperberg, A. (2019). Premarital cohabitation and direct marriage in the United States: 1956–2015. *Marriage and Family Review* 55(5): 447–475. doi:10.1080/01494929.2018.1518820.

Lamidi, E.O., Manning, W.D., and Brown, S.L. (2019). Change in the stability of first premarital cohabitation among women in the United States, 1983–2013. *Demography* 56(2): 427–450. doi:10.1007/s13524-019-00765-7.

Manning, W.D. (2020). Young adulthood relationships in an era of uncertainty: A case for cohabitation. *Demography* 57(3): 799–819. doi:10.1007/s13524-020-00881-9.

Manning, W.D., Smock, P.J., and Fettro, M.N. (2019). Cohabitation and marital expectations among single millennials in the U.S. *Population Research and Policy Review* 38(3): 327–346. doi:10.1007/s11113-018-09509-8.

McLanahan, S. (2004). Diverging destinies: How children are faring under the second demographic transition. *Demography* 41(4): 607–627. doi:10.1353/dem.2004.0033.

McLanahan, S. (2009). Fragile families and the reproduction of poverty. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 621(1): 111–131. doi:10.1177/0002716208324862.

Raley, R.K., Sweeney, M.M., and Wondra, D. (2015). The growing racial and ethnic divide in U.S. marriage patterns. *The Future of Children* 25(2): 89–109. doi:10.1353/foc.2015.0014.

Rindfuss, R.R. and VandenHeuvel, A. (1990). Cohabitation: A precursor to marriage or an alternative to being single? *Population and Development Review* 16(4): 703–726. doi:10.2307/1972963.

Sassler, S. and Lichter, D.T. (2020). Cohabitation and marriage: Complexity and diversity in union-formation patterns. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82(1): 35–61. doi:10.1111/jomf.12617.

Sassler, S. and Miller, A.J. (2011). Class differences in cohabitation processes. *Family Relations* 60(2): 163–177. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3729.2010.00640.x.

Sassler, S. and Miller, A.J. (2017). *Cohabitation nation*. Berkeley: University of California Press. doi:10.1525/9780520962101.

Solomon-Fears, C.D. (2014). Nonmarital births: An overview. (CRS Report 7-5700). Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service. https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R43667.pdf.

Studer, M. (2013). WeightedCluster library manual: A practical guide to creating typologies of trajectories in the social sciences with R. (LIVES Working Papers 24). Lausanne: Swiss Centre of Expertise in Life Course Research. doi:10.12682/lives.2296-1658.2013.24.

Studer, M. and Ritschard, G. (2016). What matters in differences between life trajectories: A comparative review of sequence dissimilarity measures. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society)* 179(2): 481–511. doi:10.1111/rssa.12125.

Zaidi, B. and Morgan, S.P. (2017) The second demographic transition theory: A review and appraisal. *Annual Review of Sociology* 43: 473–92. doi:10.1146/annurev-soc-060116-053442.