

# EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS DURING THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD: HOW THE PAST INFLUENCES THE PRESENT

Amy Lucas

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the  
Department of Sociology.

Chapel Hill  
2012

Approved By:

Kathleen Mullan Harris

Philip N. Cohen

Guang Guo

Lisa D. Pearce

Peter Uhlenberg

## **ABSTRACT**

**AMY LUCAS: Exploring Relationships During the Transition to Adulthood: How the Past Influences the Present**  
(Under the direction of Kathleen Mullan Harris)

In this study, I advance knowledge on our understanding of romantic relationship quality and parenting through three interrelated substantive chapters. Analyses use longitudinal, nationally representative data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health).

In Chapter 2, I seek to better understand how relationship quality, parenting levels, and parenting behaviors may differ by immigrant generation and race/ethnicity. I find that romantic relationship quality does not vary by immigrant generation, but it does by race/ethnicity. In particular, Blacks report lower levels of romantic relationship quality, compared to whites. With regard to parenting levels, I do not find any differences by immigrant generation or race/ethnicity. There are differences, however, in language usage. Members of the first and second generation are less likely to speak English only at home to their children. In addition, Latinos are less likely than Asians to speak English only at home.

In the third chapter of my dissertation, I examine the role that both socialization and personality have in the development of romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. Findings suggest that socialization operates independently of personality, and

that both factors should be accounted for when trying to understand romantic relationship quality in young adulthood.

Finally, in the fourth chapter of my dissertation, I seek to better understand romantic relationships in adolescence. In particular, I use latent class analysis to identify an adolescent's romantic relationship type and examine whether different types have a bearing on subsequent romantic relationship quality in adulthood. Results suggest that there are five types of adolescents: *intense*, *affectionate*, *casual*, *multi-intense*, and *multi-varied*. Furthermore, the results indicate that the membership in the affectionate class is the most positive with regard to romantic relationship quality in young adulthood, and that compared to membership in the affectionate class, membership in the multi-intense and multi-varied classes are the most negative with regard to romantic relationship quality.

To my family, with all my love

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although a doctoral dissertation represents a dedicated effort on the part of the individual author, it also requires that the author have a strong network of support. I am indebted to many people, as their support truly made it possible for me to complete this work. First, I would like to express my deepest thanks and appreciation to my advisor and committee chair, Dr. Kathleen Mullan Harris. Over the past seven years, she has offered unwavering support and mentorship, and her guidance has helped me undergo tremendous growth and development as a researcher and scholar. I am especially grateful for all of the time she devoted to providing feedback on this work. Her attention to detail and constructive criticism helped strengthen this dissertation immensely.

In addition, I would like to express immense thanks to my committee members—Dr. Lisa Pearce, Dr. Philip Cohen, Dr. Guang Guo, and Dr. Peter Uhlenberg—for their advice and support. Their feedback really helped propel my work forward, and I am very appreciative of the time and care they spent on my dissertation. Special thanks are also due to Jessica Pearlman for her expertise in latent class analysis. I greatly appreciate her willingness to devote time to strengthen my understanding of latent class analysis.

I would be remiss to not acknowledge the deep support I received from two close friends, Jessica Halliday Hardie and Ria Van Ryn. I am incredibly grateful that I was able to complete my graduate school career with two stellar scholars and even better individuals. I greatly appreciate their friendship, encouragement, and support over these past seven years.

Finally, many thanks are due to my family. I could not ask for a more supportive, loving family, and I am incredibly grateful for their support. Firstly, I would like to thank my parents, Norm and Nancy Lucas, for instilling in me a love of knowledge and encouraging me to pursue my dreams. Their belief in me has never wavered, and I have always found strength in that knowledge. Secondly, I would like to thank my brother, Steven Lucas, for his unwavering support. I have always been able to turn to him for advice and guidance. He also knew, even before I did, that sociology would be the discipline that I should pursue in my academic career. And, lastly, I would like to thank my husband, Juan José Vallejo. His belief and faith in my abilities means more than I can adequately express in words. I am forever grateful to him for adopting my dream as his own and for all the support and love he has shown me. I am especially indebted to him for his limitless patience, optimism, and encouragement while I tried to finish this past year. I had moments of doubt, but he always made those moments fleeting.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Relationships play a significant role in emotional well-being and physical health (Gottman 1998), and many of the most important relationships in an individual's life are those with family members. In young adulthood, individuals typically transition to roles such as cohabiting partner, spouse, and parent. In the transition to these roles, they form new relationships with romantic partners in the ascension to cohabiting partner or spouse, and with children in the ascension to parent. The quality of these newly formed relationships varies considerably and underlies the importance of relationships for life course emotional and physical health (Gottman; House, Landis, and Umberson 1988). It is, therefore, important to understand the factors that influence the quality of these relationships as they have important consequences for both adults and children.

Research has consistently shown that when relationship quality is low between romantic partners, marked by factors such as conflict, marital distress, divorce, and difficulties in cohabiting unions, there are negative consequences for romantic partners and children (Gottman 1988; Harold and Conger 1997; House, Landis, and Umberson 1988; Leonard and Roberts 1998; Noller and Freeney 1998; Simon and Marcussen 1999). Negative consequences include increased risk of depression and increased incidence of physical illness, suicide, violence, and mortality. On the other hand, romantic relationships marked by happiness and stability have a positive impact on adults' (Dush

et al. 2008; Proulx et al. 2007; Wickrama and Elder 1997) and children's (Leidy et al. 2009) well-being. In addition, research on parenting has revealed that the relationship between parents and children can have a lasting impact on children. Poor parenting is associated with conduct problems and anti-social behaviors in children (Farrington 1995; Fergusson, Horwood, and Lynskey 1994; Gardner 1994; Shaw et al. 1998) while warm, sensitive, and stimulating parenting promotes children's well-being (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network 2002). Warm and sensitive parenting is associated with positive children outcomes, such as high academic achievement, better psychosocial development, and less deviant behaviors (Baumrind 1991; Dornbusch et al. 1987).

## **DISSERTATION PLAN**

This dissertation examines how an individual's relationship history during their early life course impacts the relationships they form in young adulthood. This dissertation is organized as three separate research articles. Across all articles, the overarching question of interest focuses on factors that predict romantic relationship quality and parenting views in young adulthood. These analyses investigate the dynamics of the relationships an individual has with parents, romantic partners, and children throughout both adolescence and young adulthood and across population subgroups by using data from two generations and two waves (1995, 2008) of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). Add Health is a national, longitudinal, population based survey that includes large samples of Blacks, Hispanics and Asians. In addition, Add Health contains an extensive amount of data on individual's relationships in multiple domains and the quality of those relationships measured over time. The proposed research has three specific aims: in Chapter 2, I examine if romantic relationship quality

and parenting in young adulthood differ by immigrant generation and race-ethnicity. In Chapter 3, I investigate the roles socialization and personality have in the development of romantic relationship quality. Finally, in Chapter 4, I identify latent classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type and test whether these classes are associated with romantic relationship quality in young adulthood.

#### *Role of Immigrant Generation and Race/Ethnicity*

In the first substantive chapter of my dissertation, I examine family relationships in young adulthood and see whether they vary by immigrant generation and race/ethnicity. Previous research indicates that family formation patterns vary among immigrant generations, but little is known about the content and context of relationships. I seek to better understand how relationship quality, parenting contentment and stress, and parenting behaviors may differ by immigrant generation to contribute to our knowledge of romantic relationships and parenting among all racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Analyses will (1) identify whether or not first and second generation young adults differ in the quality of their romantic relationships compared to third generation young adults; (2) assess whether or not first and second generation young adults hold different feelings toward parenting than third generation young adults; and (3) assess whether or not first and second generation young adults are more likely than third generation young adults to speak a language other than English to their children.

#### *Role of Socialization and Personality*

In the second substantive chapter of my dissertation, I examine the role that both socialization and personality have in the development of romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. Previous research suggests that both socialization and personality have

an impact on relationships in young adulthood, but most studies have focused separately on either socialization or personality. Few studies have been able to examine the role that both may play in relationship quality. I build on this research by accounting for an individual's personality in the socialization processes related to relationship quality. The addition of personality to a model examining the influence socialization has on romantic relationship quality not only helps broaden our understanding of multiple factors that influence romantic relationship quality, but it also improves our understanding of the role socialization plays on romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. Analyses (1) determine if the quality of the relationship with parents in adolescence, in particular communication and expressed affection, influences the quality of relationships with romantic partners in young adulthood and whether or not part of this relationship operates through its influence on personality, which, in turn, is associated with relationship quality; (2) determine if the quality of the parents' romantic relationships in adolescence, in particular happiness, fighting, and thoughts of separation, influences the quality of relationships with romantic partners in young adulthood and whether or not this relationship operates through personality; (3) and assesses the independent role of stable personality traits in the development of romantic relationship quality in young adulthood.

#### *Role of Adolescents' Romantic Relationship Type*

Finally, I seek to better understand romantic relationships in adolescence. In particular, I want to identify an adolescent's romantic relationship type and examine whether different types have a bearing on subsequent romantic relationship quality in adulthood. Literature suggests that adolescent romantic relationships will influence adult romantic relationships, but there is a lack of information both with regard to relationships

in adolescence and how these relationships matter later in an individual's life course.

Analyses (1) identify latent classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type; (2) examine if these latent classes vary by age, race/ethnicity, and gender; and (3) assess the association that these classes have with romantic relationship quality in young adulthood.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

### **Life Course Theory**

Life Course Theory (Elder 1998) serves as an overarching framework to understand the influence of relationship experiences in adolescence on the quality of relationships formed in young adulthood. In particular, the Life Course Theory illustrates how human development is shaped by both an individual's environment and history (Elder 1998), and five central principles define this paradigm. The first principle advances the idea of life long development and aging. The second principle focuses upon human agency. Individuals actively make choices and decisions, which are contingent upon the opportunities and constraints imposed upon the individual by the social structure and culture of the individual's society (Elder 1998). The third principle concentrates on the sequencing and timing of live events, which can be viewed as a trajectory.

Trajectories take place over a duration of time, and a trajectory is marked at both the beginning and the end by a transition (Macmillan and Copher 2005). Transitions typically indicate a change in state for individuals; for example, an individual can transition to becoming a parent (Macmillan and Copher 2005) or a romantic partner. The ordering of events can impact future states and risks. The fourth principle asserts the importance of linked lives; individuals are connected by shared relationships than span generations. A good example is the relationship between parents and children. The fifth principle calls



attention to the importance of historical time and place. Cultural norms and attitudes and time specific events may directly impact an individual's current, and future, behavior.

Previous research has linked the importance of these theoretical principles to the study of relationships that individuals form over the life course. Socioeconomic disadvantage during adolescence is related to transitioning to young parenthood, which puts individuals at a greater risk for harsh parenting and the children at risk of externalizing behaviors (Scaramella et al. 2008). This example illustrates the importance of the timing and sequence of events (i.e. the age at which an individual becomes a parent), along with the importance of linked lives (how parents' parenting impacts children's behavior). Research has shown the importance of linked lives in an individual's life. Low marital quality and divorce have independent effects upon adult child-parent relations (Booth and Amato 1994) while parental distress is an important determinant of children's reported life satisfaction in the next year (Powdthavee and Vignoles 2008). Key life course transitions can alter an individual's relationships. During the transition from adolescence to young adulthood, individuals often report a close parental bond (Bucx and van Wel 2008), but it's important to note that there is a tendency for this bond to weaken as individuals transition to independent living arrangements, away from the parental home. The transition to being a co-residential romantic partner seems to be associated with a weakening of relationships with parents and family because the entrance into cohabitation and marriage is associated with less face-to-face contact with parents (Bucx et al. 2008) while married men and women report less intergenerational ties than the never married and the divorced (Sarkisian and Gerstel 2008). The transition to parenthood, however, seems to lead to a strengthening of

intergenerational relationships; young adults with children of their own tend to see parents more frequently than young adults with no children (Bucx et al. 2008).

### **Socialization Theory**

The literature on socialization theory is extensive, and the literature itself seems to use different terms to refer to socialization, such as social learning, observational learning, or a developmental-contextual approach. In this dissertation, these are the concepts to which I refer when I use the term socialization. Much of the work on socialization draws upon the works of Bandura, who has written extensively upon social learning. Bandura (1977) emphasizes the importance of observation in social learning, as he believes that social learning is the learning that results from the observation of others' behavior and the reproduction of that observed behavior. This theory seems to be rather widely-accepted by the general public (Chibucos, Leite, and Weis 2005). For instance, it is quite common in everyday life to hear individuals note that they are turning into their mothers or fathers as they age. While this theory seems to hold much appeal to the general public, it is also relevant in the world of research, as the theory has become common in discussions and work relating to parenting, child development, and family processes.

Parents are considered particularly salient in the socialization of children (De Valk 2007). Childhood living arrangements and the interactions between parents and children during childhood have both long-term and potentially permanent effects upon children (Hetherington 1972; Rutter 1971). In particular, socialization often points to the impact that parents have on their children's future parenting; children and adolescents learn how to be parents from their parents. They learn how to be parents both through

their observations of their parents' practices and through the training they receive as a result of numerous parent-child interactions that occur throughout their childhood (Conger et al. 2003).

While it seems fairly obvious that children will learn how to parent from their parents, the relationship between a child's interactions with his or her parents and interactions with romantic partners seems less clear. Do parents matter for a child's future relationships with partners and spouses? And if so, how do they impact these future relationships? Research indicates that the family of origin plays a crucial role in how young adults relate to partners in romantic relationships (Amato and Booth 2001; Conger et al. 2000). Children may, for example, observe and model the interactions between their parents when they engage in future romantic relationships (Sanders, Halford, and Behrens 1999). Children of divorced parents are at a greater risk for marital difficulties and divorce, which suggests that there may be an "intergenerational transmission" of both divorce and marital quality (Amato 1996; Amato and Booth 1997). This transmission seems to affect all romantic relationships, not just marriages, as parental divorce is linked to more negative views of romantic relationships and more problematic communication styles within those relationships (Herzog and Cooney 2002; Sanders, Halford, and Behrens 1999). The link between divorce and future relationship difficulties for children of divorced parents may in part be due to the interactions between the parents before they divorced. Cui, Fincham, and Pasley (2008) found that parental marital conflict, not divorce itself, is associated with children's conflict behavior, and this behavior is linked to lower reports of relationship quality. This connection between conflict and quality, however, is mediated by the child's relationship efficacy, which is the extent to which a

partner believes he or she has the ability to resolve conflict with his or her parent (Cui, Fincham, and Pasley 2008). Other research supports the notion that parents' interactions can impact a child's interactions in romantic relationships; hostility in parents' marital relationships is related to the levels of hostility in adolescents' romantic relationships (Stocker and Richmond 2007).

A child's intimate communication skills, such as problem solving and conflict management, that are related to both success and failure in romantic relationships are likely influenced by his or her family of origin (Feldman, Gowen, and Fisher 1998; Sanders, Halford, and Behrens 1999). The first researchers who have been able to assess the relationship between the family of origin and romantic relationship skills with the use of longitudinal data are researchers who have used data collected from a prospective longitudinal study in Iowa (for details on the initial study, see Conger and Elder 1994). While these data allow researchers to evaluate family of origin influences on future relationships, the data are not nationally representative and not generalizable to the United States as a whole. In general, research using these data have found that parents influence their children's future relationships. Conger et al. (2000) found that the interactional styles of children may be directly influenced by parents' parenting practices. Adolescents who were raised in nurturing and supportive families displayed more supportive and less hostile behaviors toward their romantic partners in young adulthood (Conger et al. 2000). Dinero et al. (2008) found that both the family of origin and subsequent romantic relationships affect quality, but as romantic relationships persist, the direct influences of the family of origin decreases, which indicates that the family of origin may be of prime significance for the relationships that an individual forms early in

life. Furthermore, Donnellan, Larsen-Rife, and Conger (2005) found that both individual differences in personality and differences in developmental experiences, in particular parenting practices, are linked to romantic relationship competence. By examining both personality and differences in developmental experiences, this work takes into account individual differences that may account for differences in the parenting practices received.

### **Shared Themes**

Both life course and socialization theories note the importance of linked lives and how the experiences within the family of origin can impact future relationships. Both theories also suggest that to fully understand the quality of the relationships an individual forms in young adulthood, it is necessary to look “backwards” to adolescence and childhood, as experiences and relationships from this time period will impact current relationships.

### **Conceptual Model**

I use one overarching conceptual model to guide and link the three dissertation articles. The conceptual model draws from the life course and socialization theories, and the fundamental assumption of this model is that experiences in adolescence shape and impact the relationships that an individual forms in young adulthood. Each article examines a different aspect of adolescence (i.e. cultural differences in the socialization processes of adolescents, captured by immigrant generation; relationships with parents; early romantic relationships) and seeks to inform how that aspect influences current relationships in young adulthood, focusing in particular on the quality of romantic relationships.

## Data

I use data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) throughout this dissertation. Add Health is a longitudinal, nationally-representative, school-based study of ethnically diverse American adolescents in seventh through twelfth grade in 1995. Currently four waves of data have been collected. Wave I was collected during 1994-1995. In 1994 a nationally representative sample of 80 U.S. high schools and 52 middle schools was selected using a stratified cluster design, and an in-school questionnaire was administered to every student attending these schools [N=90,118]. Based on the school rosters, a second sample was drawn for extensive in-home interviews with adolescents and a parent in Wave I. A core sample of 200 adolescents was randomly selected, along with a number of oversamples (e.g., ethnic, disabled, genetic) for a total sample size of 20,745 at Wave I in 1995. In 1996, Wave II was collected. All eligible adolescents (ages 13 to 20 years) who took the in-home interview at Wave I were followed, except for the 1995 graduates [N=14,738]. In 2001-022, the collection of data for Wave III began. In Wave III all located Wave I respondents, now 18-26 years old, were administered an in-home interview [N=15,197]. During 2007 and 2008, a fourth in-home interview was conducted with the original Wave I respondents, now 24-32 years old [N=15,701]. Response rates are relatively high for a longitudinal study: in Wave I, 78.9%; Wave II, 88.2%; Wave III, 77.4%, and Wave IV 80.3% completed in-home interviews.

These analyses will use data from Wave I and Wave IV and the parent interview at Wave I. Wave I has extensive measures on family composition and dynamics during adolescence, along with some of the first nationally-representative information on

adolescent romantic relationships. Wave IV has a complete marriage and cohabitation history, including unique information on the nature of the current relationship, along with a complete birth history and measures of how respondents currently feel as parents.

### **Longitudinal Analytic Design**

The scientific purpose of Add Health's Wave IV is to study the developmental and health trajectories across the life course of adolescence into young adulthood. This dissertation focuses upon developmental trajectories, in particular ones regarding romantic and parenting relationships. A major goal of this dissertation is to assess how relationships and experiences in adolescence are associated with the development and content of relationships in young adulthood. In the pursuit of this goal, the chapters in this dissertation will utilize longitudinal data to measure background factors during adolescence, such as immigrant generation, family of origin relationships and romantic relationships, which in turn are related to the quality of current romantic relationships, as well as parenting views and behaviors in young adulthood (age 24-32).

### **STUDY CONTRIBUTIONS**

Understanding the nature of family relationships during young adulthood is a key area of interest in sociology of the family. While there is a large body of literature that examines both romantic relationships quality and parenting in young adulthood, this study contributes to the family literature in a number of ways. In general, this study increases our knowledge of how an individual's life course influences both romantic relationship quality and parenting because it uses longitudinal data that is nationally-representative. Though I cannot make any causal claims, I can map the correlation in relationship development across the life course to show relationships in adolescence, with

both parents and romantic partners, are related to relationships formed in young adulthood. I, therefore, confirm the existence of a “relationship trajectory.” Furthermore, much of the literature on romantic relationships focuses on structural differences, not qualitative differences like quality, so this study makes important contributions to the romantic relationship literature by examining a largely understudied aspect of romantic relationships. In addition, each substantive chapter also makes important specific contributions to the literature.

Firstly, this study is able to contribute knowledge on how romantic relationship quality and parenting vary by immigrant generation and race/ethnicity. Extensive research on immigrant families has been conducted in the past decade, but this research has typically focused on family behaviors (i.e. family formation patterns) and family processes (i.e. intergenerational relations) (Glick 2010). There has been little work that has examined the processes within the romantic relationships of immigrants, such as marital satisfaction and the functioning of marital units (Glick 2010). There is a large gap in knowledge as to how adaptation to American culture impacts relationship behavior and family views among young adult immigrants, and this current study helps to address this gap in the literature by studying how these factors vary, both in terms of immigrant generation and race/ethnicity. This study, therefore, broadens our understanding of family relationships among all racial and ethnic groups in the United States.

Secondly, this study contributes to a greater understanding of the underlying mechanisms of romantic relationships by bridging two extensive streams of research on the family to advance knowledge on the role that the family of origin and stable personality traits play in romantic relationships trajectories into young adulthood.



Explanations for successful close personal relationships have focused on two theoretical mechanisms: socialization processes and personality traits. The socialization perspective suggests that the patterns of relating to romantic partners are based on experiences in the family of origin while a personality-based perspective suggests that individuals have relatively enduring personality traits, which are crucial for understanding behavior in any relationship, including romantic ones. Few studies have been able to tease apart the association that both socialization and personality have with relationship satisfaction and interactions, because most studies have tended to focus upon one theory over the other, and few have representative data to test both.

Finally, this study advances knowledge on adolescent romantic relationships. Life Course Theory suggests that adolescent romantic relationship history will shape the nature of later, more permanent romantic relationships. While attention has increasingly turned to adolescent romantic relationships in the romantic relationship literature, a lot of questions remain unanswered with regard to the nature of adolescent romantic relationships. There is very little data on the first relationships respondents form in adolescence. The limited data that has been previously studied has come from non-representative data on small, local samples. Add Health is the first nationally representative data on adolescent romantic relationships that are longitudinal. This chapter, therefore, really advances our knowledge of adolescent romantic relationships because Add Health has data on a diverse and nationally representative sample that includes all racial and ethnic groups and socioeconomic statuses. By identifying latent classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type, I am able to help advance our understanding of the nature and types of relationships that adolescents form, and I can

examine whether or not adolescents' romantic relationship type vary across subgroups within the population. In addition, I am actually able to examine whether or not these classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type influence romantic relationship quality in adulthood, which broadens our understanding of the factors that matter in adults' romantic relationship quality.

## CHAPTER 2

### IMMIGRANT AND RACIAL/ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP QUALITY, PARENTING ATTITUDES, AND LANGUAGE USAGE AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

Since the 1965 Immigration Act, there has been a large influx of immigrants from Latin America and Asia, leading to rapid changes in the ethnic diversity of the United States (Portes and Rumbaut 1990). From 1980 to 2009, the percentage of Latino children in the United States more than doubled, increasing from 9 percent to 22 percent, and the percentage is projected to increase to 27% by 2021 (Child Trends 2009). Asian children comprised four percent of the child population in 2009, and they are expected to comprise 5% of the child population by 2021 (Child Trends 2009). Conversely, from 2000 to 2010, the percentage of non-Hispanic white children declined from 61 percent to 56 percent, and the percentage is projected to decline to 51% by 2021 (Child Trends 2009). Foreign-born children, known as the first generation, and American-born children of foreign-born parents, known as the second generation, are the fastest growing demographic groups in the American population. From 2000 to 2008, the population of first and second generation children grew by 29.5%, and these children accounted for nearly one-fourth of all children in the United States (Child Trends 2010). In 2000, over half of these children (52.8%) were of Latino descent and approximately 16% were of Asian descent (Child Trends 2000).

It is also important to note that in the last 50 years, the United States has not only been experiencing a growth in ethnic diversity, but it also has been a period of change for the family. The institution of marriage has undergone profound transformations; in 1960 72% of American adults were married compared to only 51% of American adults in 2010 (Cohn et al. 2011). In addition, the median age of first marriage has risen from approximately 23 for men and 20 for women in 1960 to 28.7 for men and 26.5 for women in 2010 (Cohn et al. 2011). Conversely cohabitation has become increasingly widespread: almost 70% of American women in their early thirties have ever cohabited (National Center for Marriage and Family Research 2010). The changing ethnic diversity, along with changing family patterns, have brought about rapid cultural and structural change to American society and provide a rich context for social and demographic study. In particular, it is important to study the development of first and second generation children, and how these children adapt to living in the United States. Their development will have wide-ranging effects on American society, particularly as they transition to adulthood, enter the labor force, and form their own families. First and second generation children are often raised in families with more traditional family values, which clash with many of the changing family norms in the United States. It is of interest to observe whether children of the first and second generation assimilate to these changing norms, or if they will retain more traditional family norms.

There has been an extensive body of research that has examined outcomes of immigrant adults through the use of cross-sectional data; and in recent years, more attention has been focused upon the adaptation experiences of recent immigrants' children (Portes 1996; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). In particular, this research has focused

on educational outcomes during both childhood and adolescence. Considerably less attention, however, has focused upon the adaptation of the first and second generation in other domains. There also has been extensive research on immigrant families in the past decade, but the main focus of this research has been to compare the family behaviors of the first generation to the third generation (Glick 2010). Considerably less is known about the second generation, as compared to the first and third, and most studies have not utilized longitudinal data, relying on the Census for their analysis (Glick 2010) or non-representative local samples. Immigrant research on the family has typically examined family behaviors (i.e. family formation patterns) and family processes (i.e. intergenerational relations) (Glick 2010). Very little research has studied romantic relationships among immigrants, and even less has examined the processes within the romantic relationships of immigrants, such as marital satisfaction and the functioning of marital units (Glick 2010).

Although researchers have started to gain an understanding of family formation patterns among immigrant generations, little is known about the actual relationships and views toward familial roles, such as parenting. In particular, there is a large gap in knowledge as to how adaptation to American culture impacts relationship behavior and family views among young adult immigrants. Relationships play a significant role in both emotional well-being and physical health (Gottman 1998), so it is crucial to understand factors that positively and negatively impact relationships. During young adulthood, individuals transition to roles such as romantic partner, spouse, and parent. Little is known with regard to how these roles may vary by immigrant generation, and this gap in knowledge limits our understanding of romantic relationships and parenting among all

racial and ethnic groups in the United States. The increasing ethnic diversity of the United States implies a changing context for romantic relationships and parenting among young adults for this could be a domain that immigration will have significant influence. Alternatively, ethnic assimilation into dominant American norms may mute ethnic differences in these domains.

Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) make it possible to examine romantic relationship quality, parenting views, and parenting behaviors for individuals of various immigrant generations. Add Health is a nationally-representative study of more than 20,000 adolescents in grades seven through twelve in the United States in 1995. It currently has collected four waves of data. Add Health's national representativeness and large sample size make it an ideal study for exploring romantic relationships and parenting among first and second generation youth, as Add Health over-sampled Latino and Asian ethnic groups, making it possible to analyze a wider range of ethnic groups in the United States than most national studies.

This article will use data from Add Health to examine whether romantic relationship quality, parenting views, and language practices with children differ by generational status and race/ethnicity. In addition, this article will contribute to a greater understanding of the factors that influence romantic relationships and parenting, as well as explore the assimilation and acculturation of first and second generation youth in terms of family processes. Knowing if, and how, relationship quality, parenting views, and parenting practices differ by immigrant generation and race/ethnicity will help advance knowledge on family processes and change in the United States. If one-fourth of the population will be first or second generation individuals, it is important to understand the

types of relationships formed within these groups of the population. It is possible that their relationships will closely resemble the relationships of members of the third generation, but it is also possible that their relationships may differ, if they have not assimilated fully to changing American norms about the family. If that is the case, it could change the context in which we evaluate and understand romantic and parent-child relationships.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Theoretical Framework: Socialization and Assimilation**

Socialization theory is a common framework for studying parenting, child development, and family processes in social science research. Socialization theory explains how the family and the larger community influence the development of youth (Maccoby 1992; Maccoby and Martin 1983). Socialization's main function with the family is to teach children and adolescents the values, attitudes, norms, and behaviors most valued by parents and other familial adults, as well as to prepare adolescents to assume adult roles in society. Parents are considered particularly important in the socialization of children (De Valk 2007), as childhood living arrangements and interactions between parents and children during childhood have both long-term and potentially permanent effects on children (Hetherington 1972; Rutter 1971). Many assume that parental influence decreases as children age, but research suggests that parents exert a continuing influence on children during adolescence and beyond (Maccoby 1992; Amato and Booth 2001).

Socialization theory is also prominently featured in assimilation theories, which point to socialization processes, particularly within the family context, as playing an

important role in the acculturation of immigrant children (Portes 1996; Zhou 1999). As compared to third generation youth, first and second generation youth are more likely to have closer ties to their cultural traditions and ethnic values; they are more likely to speak a language other than English at home, particularly the first generation, and they typically grow up embedded within tightly knit social networks in ethnic communities (Zhou 1997; Zhou and Bankston 1996).

### **Structural Differences in Families**

The traditional assimilation model argues that length of residence, coupled with succeeding generations, leads to progress and a narrowing of differentials with the native-born population (Gordon 1964). This model, therefore, suggests that there should be differences with regard to family behaviors by immigrant generation, and that these differences should narrow both across generations and over time. As Glick (2010) notes in her review of immigrant families, traditionally studies looked for signs of assimilation in the family context by examining intermarriage. More recently studies, however, have looked for signs of assimilation with regard to other family behaviors, such as entering into marriage (Lloyd 2006; Oropesa and Landale 2004) and cohabitation (Brown, Van Hook, and Glick 2008).

Research on immigrant families does indicate that there are generational differences in various family behaviors, including marital timing, union formation, family structure, and childbearing. These findings suggest that socialization of individuals of different generations may differ, explaining the generational differences in family patterns and behaviors in young adulthood. For example, Landale and Oropesa (2007) studied marital timing and found that foreign born Latino females are more likely to



marry at earlier ages than the native born. Chen, Harris, and Guo (2005) examined the union formation of nine ethnic groups and found that the first generation is more likely to marry at a young age as compared to young adults in the third generation. These findings support classic assimilation theories because the age of first marriage tends to be lower in many of the sending countries than it is in the United States. Thus, the first generation is closer to its ethnic traditions, but increasing generations adopt native norms. Rates of cohabitation also differ by generational status, as levels of cohabitation increase by succeeding generations (Brown, Van Hook, and Glick 2008; Chen, Harris, and Guo 2005). Again, these findings support a traditional assimilation model because the levels of cohabitation rise with succeeding generations, indicating a narrowing of generational differentials in regard to forming cohabiting unions with the native population.

Similar findings occur for family structure. Family size and marriage propensity diminish while non-marital childbearing increases across generations for females of Mexican descent (Landale and Oropesa 2007). In addition, Oropesa and Landale (2004) argue that the Latino population will not have a major impact on marriage patterns in the United States because the exposure to American norms will result in an erosion of traditional marriage among Latino immigrants and their descendants. In terms of fertility, Durand, Telles, and Flashman (2006) found that number of children ever born to women of Mexican descent is higher for the first generation (2.7) than it is for the second (2.1) and the third (2.3). In addition, Landale and Oropesa (2007) note that childbearing by unmarried mothers also appears to vary by generational status; results suggest that the percentage of births to native-born women of Mexican descent is higher than to foreign-born women of Mexican descent. These findings suggest that family behavior of

immigrants increasingly reflects the family behavior of natives across succeeding generations.

### **Cultural Differences in Families**

When discussing generational differences in family behavior, it is impossible to discuss immigrant generation without also referencing race and ethnicity. As Bryant et al. (2008) note, “ethnicity and culture are powerful lenses through which individuals and couples construct notions of marriage, family, work-family task enactment and expectations, and economic relations within the context of marriage and family” (241). Researchers have often drawn on cultural explanations for Latino family patterns that occur in the United States. Cultural explanations tend to involve familism, which refers to a collective orientation and implies that family roles are highly valued (Lansdale and Oropesa 2007). Embedded within the notion of familism is the idea that the commitment to family by Latinos and non-Latinos is qualitatively distinct (Vega 1995). Harwood et al. (2002) reviewed the literature on Latino parenting in the United States, and they found that Latino youth are more likely to turn to family members for advice, to report more positive attitudes toward their parents, to express greater levels of satisfaction with family life, and to feel a greater duty to respect and assist their parents than European-American youth.

As Lansdale and Oropesa (2007) note, it is unclear whether Latinos become less concerned with the family and more concerned with the individual as they assimilate more fully into American society and life. Classical assimilation theory would suggest that familism should decrease and individualism increase with increasing exposure to the native-born population. Some studies, however, suggest that the extended family within

the United States becomes better integrated and larger over time because the number of family members living in the United States increases after the first generation, which means Latino families may still have high levels of collective support across immigrant generations (Lansdale and Oropesa 2007).

While less research has involved cultural explanations for the family patterns and dynamics of Asian-American families, research does suggest that Asian-Americans, like Latinos, value the family highly. As Chao and Tseng (2002) note, the most often cited characteristic with regard to Asian-American parenting is the strong emphasis that is placed upon familial interdependence. In a review of the diversity within Asian-American families, Ishii-Kuntz (2000) noted that Asian-Americans, compared to those of European-American descent, were more likely to live closer to, provide more financial support to, feel more obligated toward, and interact more frequently with their parents as adults. These findings suggest that Asian-Americans, like Latinos, are socialized in a cultural environment that places a high value on collective orientation and the family. Assimilation theory suggests that this familial orientation should decrease over time and across generations of Asian-Americans, but it is unclear if Asian-Americans become less familial as they assimilate more fully into American society.

### **Relationship Quality**

In addition to structural and cultural family differences by both race and immigrant generation, there are also differences in the content and quality of family relationships. An extensive body of research has examined race differences in relationship quality among married individuals, indicating that relationship quality and rates of relationship disruption differ significantly across racial/ethnic groups in the

United States (Adelmann, Chadwick, and Baerger 1996; Broman 1993; Bulanda and Brown 2007; Dillaway and Broman 2001; Phillips and Sweeney 2006). Much of this research has focused on Black-white differences. Research indicates that Blacks report lower levels of marital quality; Blacks are less likely to think of their marriages as harmonious (Broman 1993); and Black women report lower levels of satisfaction within their marriages as compared to white women (Broman 1993; Dillaway and Broman 2001). Not as much research, though, has focused on the relationship quality reported by other racial and ethnic groups. Previous research suggests relationship quality among Mexican Americans is similar to whites' (Phillips and Sweeney 2006), but more research is needed on this topic. As Latinos are now the largest minority group in the United States, and as the numbers of Asians continue to increase, it is vital to include these groups in studies of relationship quality to understand the racial and ethnic diversity of relationship quality in the United States.

There is also very little research on relationship quality by immigrant status or immigrant generation. Bryant et al. (2008) examined marital satisfaction between African Americans and Black Caribbeans and found that satisfaction differs by immigrant status for men. Black Caribbean men who immigrated to the United States 11 or more years ago, reported higher levels of marital satisfaction than Black Caribbean men who were born in the United States (Bryant et al. 2008). This study suggests that immigrant status may be predictive of relationship quality, but more studies need to examine this relationship. In particular, is immigrant status associated with other aspects of relationship quality, such as affection, and do these differences generalize to other immigrant groups? Furthermore, is it only immigrant status that matters for relationship

quality, or does it vary by immigrant generation and race/ethnicity? Finally, if there is a relationship between immigrant generation and quality, does it follow a classic assimilation model like the relationship between immigrant generation and many other family processes?

As Bryant et al. (2008) note, ethnicity and culture are powerful lenses that individuals and couples use to construct notions of family. It seems likely that first and second generation young adults may be more likely to hold values held by their parents, whose values may conform to different ethnic and cultural norms than the values held by the third generation and their parents. Socialization during childhood and adolescence may impact the relationships formed during young adulthood, as individuals from the first and second generation may evaluate relationships and roles based upon different criteria and values than the third generation does.

Cherlin (2004) argue that marriage in the United States has transitioned from being viewed as “companionate” to being viewed as “individualized.” Marriage is increasingly evaluated by the satisfaction that the relationship brings to an individual rather than the satisfaction an individual may gain by creating a family and assuming the role of spouse and parent. Moreover, the reward sought in both marriage and other close relationships has shifted as individuals aim for personal growth (Cherlin 2004). Because Latinos and Asian-Americans comprise a large proportion of the first and second generation in the United States, their socialization into a less individualistic and more familial view toward relationships may have an impact upon their evaluations of their relationships. Their reported relationship quality may differ from third generation young adults, as they may not base their evaluations of marriage and other close relationships,

like cohabitation and dating, upon such individualized factors as personal fulfillment and growth.

### **Union Type**

When discussing relationship quality, factors beyond race/ethnicity and immigrant generation need to be taken into account. In particular, the type of union will matter for there are differences both with regard to who cohabits and marries in the United States and the level of quality experienced by cohabitators and married individuals. Compared to marriage, cohabitation is selective of the less educated, younger adults, divorcees, non-whites and those who are more supportive of egalitarian gender roles (Bumpass and Lu 2000; Clarkberg, Stolzenberg, and Waite 1995; Smock 2000), though this selection may be waning as larger proportions of young adults cohabit before marriage (National Center for Marriage and Family Research 2010). Cohabitation is also more likely to be entered into by third generation young adults, compared to first and second generation young adults, and early marriage is less common in the third generation than the first (Chen, Harris, and Guo 2005). The differences between cohabitation and marriage extend beyond who is more likely to enter each type of unions; cohabitators typically report lower levels of relationship quality than married individuals (Brown and Booth 1996). Any examination of relationship quality will need to account for the relationship type, and it will be important to try to disentangle the role that both union type and immigrant generation play in reported relationship quality. Because members of the first and second generation are more likely to be married and less likely to be cohabiting than members of the third generation, it will be important to document whether quality differs by generation within relationship types.

## **Parenting Attitudes and Behaviors**

Research that has examined attitudes toward parenting suggests that attitudes vary by ethnicity. Julian, McKenry, and McKelvey (1994) examined a wide range of parental attitudes and discovered that ethnic parents placed a greater value on children exercising self-control and succeeding in school than white parents did. Jambunathan, Burts, and Pierce (2000) studied parenting attitudes of immigrant Latino, Asian-American, and Asian Indian mothers, along with native European American and African-American mothers. Their study revealed that African-American, Asian Indian, and Asian-American mothers were more likely to reverse roles with their children (i.e. these mothers scored higher on measures of the parent's use of the child to gratify her needs) and have lower empathetic awareness of their children's needs than European-American and Latino mothers. In addition, Asian-American, Asian Indian, and Latino mothers had less appropriate expectations of their children than both European American and African-American mothers did (Jambunathan, Burts, and Pierce 2000). This study indicates that there is cultural variation in parental attitudes; however because this study did not have a sample of respondents from each immigrant generation within ethnicity, it is impossible to determine if the variation is due to ethnicity, immigrant generation, or a combination of the two.

Members of the first and second generation may be socialized in an environment that emphasizes different parental values than the ones learned by members of the third generation. For example, cultural factors like familism may prompt members of the first and second generation to more highly value the role of parent and relationships with children than members of the third generation. Flores et al. (2004) state that the family

patterns of relatively early marriage and high fertility among young Latino women reflect an orientation toward family, while East (1998) argues that Mexican girls are socialized to become both wives and mothers. An orientation toward motherhood does not appear to be unique to Latino females, as Ishii-Kuntz's (2000) review of Asian-American families revealed that for many Asian-American mothers the most important bond is with their children, not with their husbands, which suggests that the role of mother is very highly regarded. As individuals assimilate more fully into American society, both over time and across generations, these differences may narrow so that members of the first generation, regardless of ethnicity, will begin to hold similar attitudes toward parenting.

One factor that has been extensively studied as part of the acculturation process is language assimilation. Previous studies suggest that there is quick language assimilation across generations, as the first generation is more likely to be bilingual (speaking both English and the native language of parents) than the second generation while monolingualism (only speaking English) is the norm among the third generation (Portes 1996). Because few studies have been able to track immigrant youth from adolescence into young adulthood and parenthood, it remains unknown how individuals of different generations choose to communicate with their own children as they become parents.

What language will members of the first and second generation speak to their children in the home? Will they want their children to retain ties to their ethnic family background and culture, and hence, speak their native language with their children? Or will they want to encourage their children to fully assimilate into American society, and speak only English to their children?



While Sue and Telles (2007) did not examine the language choices parents made for their children, their study does offer a glimpse into choices Latino parents make about maintaining ethnic ties for their children. This study examined naming practices of Latino parents from the Los Angeles area in 1995. The authors discovered that greater exposure to American culture increased the likelihood of a child receiving an English name (Sue and Telles 2007). The study also revealed that U.S. born Latino parents often gave children English names that can be translated into Spanish, such as Anthony, which indicates that these parents are able to assimilate into American society while also maintaining ties to their ethnic and cultural origins (Sue and Telles 2007).

Extending the findings of this study to language use suggests that parents of later generations may be more likely to speak English with their children, and that members of the first and second generation may not feel the need to choose only one language to speak to their children. It may be that these parents choose to speak in both their native language and English so that their children can both assimilate into American society and maintain ties to their cultural origins. The choices that these individuals make as parents will have an effect upon the cultural and behavioral practices that they pass onto their children, and one of the first decisions a parent may make is the language to speak to his or her child.

### **Purpose of Study**

The goal of this study is to examine differences in relationship quality, parenting views, and language use in young adulthood by immigrant generation and race/ethnicity. The first question I address is whether relationship quality in dating, cohabiting, and marital unions differs by generational status. Relationship quality is an ambiguous term,

as it encompasses both objective and subjective measures of quality within romantic relationships. Because relationship quality is multidimensional (Willets 2006), I use four indicators of romantic relationship quality in this study: satisfaction, partner's affection, satisfaction with sex life, and contentment<sup>1</sup>.

The second question I address is whether there are generational differences in parenting, in particular differences in views toward parenting and the language spoken to children at home. To answer this question, I examine parental contentment and parental stress as fundamental dependent variables. In the analysis of the language parents speak to their children, I first examine whether generational status and race/ethnicity predict speaking English only at home. I then explore more fully the multiple language choices made by first and second generation parents by examining whether generational status and race/ethnicity predict a multinomial choice of language combinations in interactions with children.

## **METHODS**

### **Data**

Data come from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), which is an on-going nationally-representative sample of individuals who were in 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade in 1995. The last wave of data, the fourth wave, was collected in 2008 when individuals ranged in age from 24 to 32. Add Health used a cluster sample design that was both school-based and multi-stage. The study began in Wave I, in 1995, with an in-school questionnaire that was administered to a nationally representative sample of seventh through twelfth graders. The in-school questionnaire was completed by more

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<sup>1</sup> I used factor analysis in determining the specific dimensions of romantic relationship quality that are examined in the study.

than 90,000 adolescents. Add Health then used school rosters to randomly select 200 students from each school to participate in in-home interviews, along with a number of oversamples (e.g. race, ethnicity, disability, and genetic). In particular, the sample includes four ethnic-groups oversamples: Black adolescents in well-educated families, Chinese adolescents, Cuban adolescents, and Puerto Rican adolescents. The sample also includes significant numbers of adolescents from Mexican, Nicaraguan, Japanese, South Korean, Filipino, and Vietnamese descent. This ethnic diversity within the sample makes it possible to examine differences across all main ethnic sub-groups within the American population. Wave I's total sample size for in-home interviews is 20,745 adolescents. At Wave IV, over 80% of original Wave I respondents were re-interviewed, resulting in a sample size of 15,701 individuals.

The fact that this sample is longitudinal and nationally-representative, with oversamples of several Latino and Asian groups and extensive measures on romantic relationships and parenthood in young adulthood, make it an ideal dataset for exploring the role that generational status has upon relationship quality, attitudes toward parenting, and language use with children in young adulthood. For additional information on the Add Health study, see Harris et al. (2009) for a more detailed description.

This study uses data from both the Wave I and Wave IV surveys. The samples for this analysis differ, depending upon the research question. For both research questions, the analysis is limited to individuals who participated in both waves and whose generational status and race/ethnicity are known. For the analysis on relationship quality, only those individuals who were in a current dating, cohabiting, or marital relationship at the collection of the Wave IV survey and answered all of the relationship quality

questions are included. Of the 15,701 Wave IV respondents, 9,021 are classified as being in a current romantic relationship; however, of these respondents 84 are missing data on at least one of the key indicators and 579 have missing weights. The sample size for the relationship quality analysis is therefore 8,358. For the analysis on parenting, only those individuals who reported having children at the collection of the Wave IV survey and answered all of the parental attitudes and language use questions are included. 7,938 respondents, approximately 50% of the Wave IV sample, are classified as being parents; however, of these respondents 391 are missing data on at least one of the key indicators and 497 have missing weights. The sample size for the parenting analysis is 7,050.

## **Measures**

Table 2.1 provides means for all measures in the analysis of relationship quality by immigrant generation. For all measures, a higher value indicates a higher level of each measure (i.e. on a 5-point scale of satisfaction, a 1 would indicate low levels of satisfaction while a 5 would indicate high levels of satisfaction). Measures whose original question wording led to scales where lower numbers would indicate higher levels of the measure were reverse-coded.

### *Dependent Variables: Relationship Quality*

Four measures of relationship quality have been constructed from the Wave IV questionnaire for this analysis: satisfaction, partner's affection, satisfaction with sex, and contentment. Satisfaction is measured from two questions: respondents were asked on a 5-point scale to rate their satisfaction with the way in which the respondent and partner handle problems and disagreements and their satisfaction with the way in which the respondent and partner handle family finances. A measure for overall satisfaction was

created, which is the mean of the responses to the two items<sup>2</sup>. There are no differences in reported satisfaction, when comparing mean scores by immigrant generation.

Partner's affection is also measured from two questions: respondents were asked on a 5-point scale to rate their agreement with the following two statements: my partner listens to me when I need someone to talk to and my partner expresses love and affection to me. A measure for overall partner affection was created, which is the mean of the responses to the two items<sup>3</sup>. Reported partner's affection does not vary by immigrant generation.

Satisfaction with sex life is measured by one question on the Wave IV questionnaire. Respondents were asked to report their satisfaction with their sex life on a 5-point scale. The first generation's satisfaction with sex life is marginally more significant than the third generation's, when comparing means by immigrant generation.

Contentment is measured from three questions on the Wave IV questionnaire: respondents were asked to report how much they enjoy doing ordinary, day-to-day things together, how much they love their partner, and how happy they are in their relationship with their partner. A measure for overall contentment was created, which is the mean of the responses to the three items<sup>4</sup>. Reported contentment does not vary by immigrant generation.

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<sup>2</sup> I also examined a measure that took the simple sum of the two scales for satisfaction. Results were consistent in all models.

<sup>3</sup> I also examined a measure that took the simple sum of the two scales for partner's affection. Results were consistent in all models.

<sup>4</sup> I also examined a measure that took the simple sum of the three scales for contentment. Results were consistent in all models.

### *Main Explanatory Variables of Interest: Immigrant Generation and Race/Ethnicity*

The measure for immigrant generation was created from nativity answers to the In-school, Wave I, Wave II, and Wave I Parent questionnaire (Harris 1999). Respondents who were not born in the United States and whose parents were foreign born were classified as Generation 1. Respondents who were born in the United States and who had at least one foreign born parent were classified as Generation 2. Finally, respondents who were born in the United States and whose parents were born in the United States were classified as Generation 3.

Race and ethnicity were self-reported by respondents at Wave I (Harris 1999). Add Health allows for rich measures in terms of race and ethnicity, and I present descriptive statistics for nine different ethnic categories: Mexican, Cuban, Other Central/South American, Puerto Rican, Chinese, Philippine, Other Asian, African/Afro-Caribbean, and European/Canadian. Due to small cell sizes, I collapsed respondents into 4 racial/ethnic groups for the multivariate analyses. Respondents could be classified as: White (European/Canadian), Black (African/Afro-Caribbean), Asian (Chinese, Philippine, and Other Asian), and Latino (Mexican, Cuban, Other Central/South American, and Puerto Rican).

### *Control Variables*

In order to fully understand the relationship between relationship quality, immigrant generation, and race/ethnicity, I control for several factors that are also likely to shape responses to relationship quality questions. First, I control for the respondent's relationship type. Respondents were asked to report on the partners with whom they had a romantic or sexual relationships. For each listed partner, respondents were asked to

report on the type of the relationship (i.e. married, cohabiting, dating) and whether or not the relationship was current. In the rare instance when individuals listed more than one “current” relationship, I selected the relationship that corresponded to the first listed partner. In this sample, 69% of respondents are married, 20% are cohabiting, and 11% are dating. In addition, I also examine whether or not the relationship is between members of the same-race. This measure was constructed from the Wave IV questionnaire, as respondents were asked to report on the race/ethnicity of their partners. I created a dummy variables so that 1=same-race relationship while a 0=a relationship with an individual of a different racial/ethnic background.

In addition, I control for basic demographic factors (gender and age). A dummy variable has been constructed in order to examine gender, where a 0=female and a 1=male. This measure was constructed from the Wave I questionnaire. The measure for age was constructed from the Wave IV questionnaire, and it is the respondent’s age at the time of the Wave IV interview.

Furthermore, I control for a respondent’s educational attainment, financial hardship, and previous relationship history. A respondent’s educational attainment was measured by a dummy variable created from the Wave IV questionnaire, which indicated whether a respondent had attained a college degree or higher = 1 or whether the respondent had attained less than a college degree = 0. Hardship is assessed by an index of six items that indicates financial hardship: whether in the past year the respondent was without phone service, couldn’t pay the full rent or mortgage, was evicted, didn’t pay a full utility bill, had utilities shut off, or worried that food would run out, ranging from 0 = none of these had happened to 6 = all of these had happened. I chose to use hardship,

rather than income, to assess the relationship between socioeconomic status and relationship quality because previous work suggests that quality is more responsive to subjective economic measures, like perceived hardship, than objective measures, like income (White and Rogers 2000). I assessed whether or not a respondent had previously cohabited through a dummy variable constructed from the Wave IV questionnaire. For those who are currently cohabiting, a respondent was classified as having previously cohabited if they listed more than one cohabitation in their list of total relationships. For those who are currently married and dating, a respondent was classified as previously cohabited if they listed at least one cohabitation in their list of total relationships. Similarly, I assessed whether or not a respondent had previously married through a dummy variable constructed from the Wave IV questionnaire. For those who are currently married, a respondent was classified as having previously married if they listed more than one marriage in their list of relationships. For those who are currently cohabiting and dating, a respondent was classified as previously married if they listed at least one marriage in their list of total relationships.

Finally, I also control for the family of origin's family structure and the educational attainment of a respondent's parents. The respondent's family structure during adolescence is measured by 5 dummy variables, which were constructed from the Wave I questionnaire. Respondents can be classified as living with: 2 biological or adoptive parents, one biological and one step-parent, single mother, single father, and two step-parents or other family (respondents in this category could be living with two step-parents, foster parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings or other adults who act as parent figures). A respondent's parents' educational attainment was measured by a



dummy variable created from the Wave I questionnaire, which indicated whether either parent had attained a college degree or higher =1 or whether the respondents' parents had attained less than a college degree = 0.

Table 2.2 provides means for all measures in the analysis of immigrant generational differences in parenting views and spoken language with children in young adulthood. For all measures, a higher value indicates a higher level of each measure (i.e. on a 5-point scale of parental contentment, a 1 would indicate low levels of contentment while a 5 would indicate high levels of contentment). Measures whose original question wording led to scales where lower numbers would indicate higher levels of the measure were reverse-coded.

*Dependent Variables: Parenting Views and Language Spoken with Children*

Two measures of parenting views have been constructed from the Wave IV questionnaire for this analysis: parental contentment and parental stress. Parental contentment is measured from two questions: respondents were asked on a 5-point scale if they were happy in their role as a parent and if they felt close to their children. A measure for overall parental contentment was created, which is the mean of the responses to the two items<sup>5</sup>. This measure was highly skewed, with approximately 74% of respondents reporting a high level of contentment, so I created a dichotomous measure<sup>6</sup> where a 1=high contentment and a 0=lower levels of contentment. There are no differences in reported parental contentment, when comparing mean scores by immigrant generation.

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<sup>5</sup> I also examined a measure that took the simple sum of the two scales for parental contentment. Results were consistent in all models.

<sup>6</sup> In the multivariate analysis, I examined models that used the original interval-scaled measure and the dichotomous measure. Results were consistent.

Parental stress is also measured from two questions from the Wave IV questionnaire: respondents were asked on a 5-point scale if the major source of stress in their lives was their children and if they felt overwhelmed by the responsibility of being a parent. A measure for overall parental stress was created, which is the mean of the responses to the two items<sup>7</sup>. Members of the first generation reported higher levels of parental stress than members of the third generation, when comparing means by immigrant generation.

A respondent's language choice for speaking with children is assessed by a measure from the Wave IV questionnaire. Respondents were asked what language they speak to their children when they are at home: English, Spanish, Other Language (Chinese, an other Asian Language, an other European language, and other language), and a combination of English and another language. In Table 2.2, I present descriptive statistics for all of these categories. For the multivariate analysis, I collapsed speaking Spanish and Other Language into one category to create a 3-category dummy variable: Non-English, English and Another Language, and English Only. Ninety-nine percent of the third generation report speaking only English to their children, while only 75% of the second generation and 55% of the first generation speak only English to their children at home. Twenty-five percent of the first generation and 8% of the second generation report speaking a language other than English to their children while 20% of the first generation and 17% of the second generation report speaking a combination of English and another language to their children.

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<sup>7</sup> I also examined a measure that took the simple sum of the two scales for parental stress. Results were consistent in all models.

### *Control Variables*

Gender, age, family structure, college degree, parents' college degree, and hardship are used as controls in this analysis. The measures for these variables are the same as previously described in the measures section. I also examined the respondent's relationship type, as I thought that this could impact parenting attitudes. For this analysis, the relationship type measure was created by using information from the relationship table that respondents filled out in the Wave IV questionnaire. A respondent was classified as married if they indicated their most current relationship type as married, as cohabiting if they indicated that their most current relationship type as cohabiting, and single if they indicated their most current relationship type as dating, a pregnancy partner (partner with whom their relationship resulted in a pregnancy), or no current relationship. In the rare instance when individuals listed more than one "current" relationship, I selected the relationship that corresponded to the first listed partner. In this sample of parents in Add Health, 70% of respondents are married, 27% are cohabiting, and 3% are single. The one new control variable I examined was the number of the children. This measure was constructed from the Wave IV questionnaire, and the measure indicates the number of children the respondent has had. Number of children ranges from 1 to 4. I capped all responses at 4 so a 4 indicates 4 or more children.

### **Analytic Strategy**

In this paper, I examine four different aspects of relationship quality: satisfaction, partner's affection, satisfaction with sex, and contentment. I use ordinary least square regression to assess the relationship between immigrant generation, race/ethnicity, and

each measure of relationship quality, all of which are interval-level scales<sup>8</sup>. I estimate three models. I first examine the bivariate relationship between immigrant generation and each romantic relationship quality measure. Model 2 examines the relationship between immigrant generation, race/ethnicity and each romantic relationship quality measure. Finally, Model 3 examines the relationship between immigrant generation, race/ethnicity, and each romantic relationship quality measure, controlling for additional demographic and relationship characteristics. In addition, I also examined whether or not there were significant interactions between immigrant generation and race/ethnicity, and immigrant generation and relationship type. I did not find any significant interactions in the relationship quality analysis so I do not report any results from any interaction effects. The p-values from the significance tests for the interactions can be found in Appendix A.

For the analysis on parenting, I examine two parenting views: parental contentment and parental stress, along with the chosen language(s) parents choose to speak to their children at home. For the analysis of parental contentment, I use logistic regression to assess the relationship between immigrant generation, race/ethnicity, and each measure of parental views, while I use linear regression for the analysis of parental stress. I estimate the same three models used in the romantic relationship quality analysis<sup>9</sup>. In addition, I also explored whether or not there were significant interactions between immigrant generation and race/ethnicity and immigrant generation and relationship type. I did not find any significant interactions in the parental attitude

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<sup>8</sup> Third generation is the reference category in this analysis. I also examined models in which the first generation is the reference category, and results were consistent in all models.

<sup>9</sup> Third generation is the reference category in this analysis. I also examined models in which the first generation is the reference category, and results were consistent in all models.

analysis so I do not report any interaction results. The p-values from the significance tests for the interactions can be found in Appendix A.

For the analysis on language, I use logistic regression and multinomial logistic regression to assess the relationship between immigrant generation, race/ethnicity, and language choice. In the logistic regression analysis, I first examine the bivariate relationship between immigrant generation and the binary outcome, speaking English only at home. I then examine Model 2, which adds race/ethnicity, and Model 3, which adds all controls. This analysis was done for all of the respondents in the sample, as it allowed me to understand how similar the first and second generation were to the third generation, with regard to language use among children<sup>10</sup>. I wanted, however, to gain a broader understanding of the choices that members of the first and second generation make with regard to language choices. I therefore limited my analysis sample to first and second generation respondents and estimated a multinomial regression so that I could analyze all three language options for these two groups: speaking a language other than English at home, speaking a combination of another language and English at home, and speaking only English at home. This analysis was limited to first and second generation Latino and Asian-American parents<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> I also examined logistic regressions with the dependent variable of speaking another language at home (both choosing to speak no English at home, or choosing to speak another language in combination with English at home). Results were consistent with the analysis presented for speaking only English at home. I choose to present speaking only English at home, as I think it best demonstrates how much the first and second generation have assimilated, since over 98% of the third generation speaks only English at home.

<sup>11</sup> The reason I limited the analysis to these two ethnic groups is that only 155 whites are classified as first or second generation, and approximately 94% of them spoke English only at home. In addition, only 78 Blacks are classified as first or second generation, and approximately 95% of them spoke English only at home.

## RESULTS

Table 2.3 presents the coefficients from the models of relationship satisfaction regressed on immigrant generation, race/ethnicity and other key background factors for relationship quality. The results do not support the assertion that satisfaction differs by immigrant generation<sup>12</sup>. While immigrant generation is not significantly related to relationship satisfaction, ethnicity is. Both Blacks and Latinos report lower relationship satisfaction, compared to Whites in Model 2. Blacks reported relationship satisfaction is 0.28 points lower than Whites while Latinos reported relationship satisfaction is 0.21 points lower. Some of this relationship is due to confounding effects of demographic and background factors entered in Model 3. In the adjusted model, Blacks reported relationship satisfaction is only 0.14 points lower than whites while Latinos is only 0.12 points lower. Asians do not significantly differ from whites in any models.

In addition, the results from the other control variable are consistent with previous literature. Dating and cohabiting individuals report lower levels of satisfaction, as compared to married individuals. Males report higher levels of satisfaction than females, as do individuals who are in same-race couples. Individuals who grew up in step-families report lower levels of satisfaction, compared to individuals who grew up in two biological parent families. Finally, individuals who have attained a college degree or higher report higher levels of satisfaction than individuals who have lower educational attainment, while hardship is negatively related to satisfaction.

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<sup>12</sup> I wondered if Asians and Latinos may be cancelling out any effect of immigrant generation in the analysis so I examined models in which only Blacks, Whites, and Latinos were included in the analysis, along with models in which only Blacks, Whites, and Asians were included in the analysis. I did this for all of the relationship quality measures, the parenting attitudes, and the language choice. Results were consistent with the results from the full model with all racial/ethnic groups.

Table 2.4 presents the coefficients from the models of partner affection regressed on immigrant generation, race/ethnicity and other key background factors for relationship quality. Again, there are no significant generational differences in partner affection, but ethnicity matters. Both Blacks and Latinos report lower levels of partner affection, compared to Whites. Blacks reported level of partner affection is 0.25 points lower than Whites while Latinos reported level of partner affection is 0.18 points lower. Again, some of this relationship is due to confounding effects of demographic and background factors entered in Model 3. In the adjusted model, Blacks reported level of partner affection is only 0.14 points lower than whites while the relationship between Latinos and reported partner affection is no longer statistically significant, signifying differences in affection for Latinos, compared to whites, are due to compositional differences in the Latino subsample (i.e. more likely to have low education, experience hardship). Asians do not significantly differ from whites in any models.

In addition, the results from the other control variable are mostly consistent with previous literature. Like satisfaction, dating and cohabiting individuals report lower levels of partner affection, as do individuals who report hardship and grew up in a step-family household. Again, males and individuals who attended college report higher levels of relationship quality, in this instance, partner affection. Unlike the satisfaction analysis, being involved in a same-race couple is not significantly related to levels of partner affection, while age, growing up with a single mother, and previously cohabiting are negatively related to levels of partner's affection. Also, individuals whose parents attended college report higher levels of partner affection than individuals whose parents did not attend college.

Table 2.5 presents the coefficients from the models of satisfaction with sex regressed on immigrant generation, race/ethnicity and other key background factors for relationship quality. The results suggest that satisfaction with sex differs by immigrant generation. In a model that only examines the bivariate relationship, immigrant generation is only marginally statistically significant, but in models that add in ethnicity and key background and demographic factors, members of the first immigrant generation are significantly more likely to be satisfied with sex, compared to members of the third generation. In both Model 2 and Model 3, members of the first generation are 0.18 points more likely to be satisfied with sex than the third generation. In contrast, there are no significant differences by ethnicity.

In addition, the results from the other control variable are mostly consistent with previous literature. Somewhat surprisingly, individuals who have attained a college degree or higher report lower levels of satisfaction with sex than individuals who have achieved lower levels of educational attainment. Hardship, age, and previously cohabiting are all negatively related to reported satisfaction with sex.

Table 2.6 presents the results for contentment. While immigrant generation is not significantly related to reports of contentment, ethnicity is. Both Blacks and Latinos report lower levels of contentment, compared to Whites. Once adjusted demographic and background factors are added to the model, the Black association reduces some, and the Latino association is no longer statistically significant. Asians do not significantly differ from whites in any models.

Among the control variables, dating individuals report lower levels of contentment, as compared to married individuals. Individuals who have attained a college



degree or higher report higher levels of contentment than individuals who have lower educational attainment, as do individuals whose parents have attained a college degree or higher, compared to individuals with parents of lower educational attainment. Finally, hardship and previously cohabiting are negatively related to reported contentment.

I now move to discussing results from the second research question, which examines generational and racial/ethnic differences in parenting. Table 2.7 presents the odds ratios from models of parental contentment regressed on immigrant generation, ethnicity, and other key background factors. The results do not support the assertion that parental contentment varies by immigrant generation. Model 1 indicates that parental contentment does vary by immigrant generation, but it does vary by ethnicity. In Model 2 Blacks and Latinos have a lower likelihood of reporting parental contentment, compared to whites. Blacks are 30% less likely than whites to report parental contentment while Latinos are 21% less likely. When statistical controls are entered in Model 3, the relationship between ethnicity and parental contentment is no longer significant.

Results from the control variables provide some interesting findings. Cohabiting individuals have a lower likelihood of reporting parental contentment, as compared to married individuals. In addition, males have a lower likelihood of reporting parental contentment, as compared to females. Somewhat surprisingly, individuals whose parents have attained a college degree or higher have a lower likelihood of reporting parental contentment, as compared to individuals whose parents have lower educational attainment. Finally, individuals who experience hardship, older individuals, and individuals with greater numbers of children all have a lower likelihood of reporting parental contentment.

Table 2.8 presents the results for parental stress. Parental stress differs slightly by immigrant generation in Model 1. Members of the first generation reported levels of stress that are 0.20 points higher than members of the third generation. This relationship, however, is not significant in Model 2 that includes race/ethnicity, and it is only marginally significant in Model 3 with all controls. Blacks are more likely to report parental stress than whites are. This relationship, however, is no longer significant in the adjusted model with all controls. Additional analyses not shown suggest that a respondent's relationship status and receipt of hardship seems to be the main confounding factors.

In addition, several control variables are significantly related to parental stress. Males report lower levels of parental stress than females. Cohabitation, compared to marriage, hardship, and the number of children increase reported stress.

Table 2.9 presents the odds ratios from models of speaking English only at home. Assimilation literature suggests that each successive generation should be more likely to speak English only at home, and the results support this assertion. The first generation is 98% less likely than the third generation to speak English only at home, while the second generation is 95% less likely. The relationship between immigrant generation and speaking English only at home remains significant when race/ethnicity and all the controls are included in models. In Model 3, the first generation is still 90% less likely than the third generation to speak English only at home, while the second generation is 82% less likely. There are also ethnic differences with regard to speaking English only at home. In Model 3, Latinos are 93% less than whites to speak only English at home, while

Asians are 71% less likely, which indicates that Latinos tend to socialize their children into their native languages at home more than Asians do.

Individuals who cohabit are over twice as likely to speak English only at home as compared to individuals who are married. In addition, individuals who have more children are slightly more likely to speak English only at home.

Table 2.10 presents the multinomial results of language choice among first and second generation Latinos and Asians. In this analysis, second generation is the reference group. I wanted to compare the first and second generation to further understand the choices made by these groups with regard to language usage. The results from the logistic regression in Table 2.9, not surprisingly, reveal that members of the first and second generation are less likely than members of the third generation to speak English only at home. I was curious, though, how different the first and second generation were with regard to speaking a language other than English at home and speaking a combination of languages. Assimilation literature suggests that the second generation would have greater language assimilation by speaking a combination of English and an other language with their children than the first generation (Portes 1996). Results from the multinomial regression models support this theory. In these models, speaking a language other than English only is the base, and results indicate that members of the first generation are less likely than members of the second generation to speak a combination of English and another language at home, as compared to speaking a language other than English. In addition, members of the first generation are less likely than members of the second generation to choose speaking English only at home, as compared to speaking a language other than English. I also discovered that there are differences between Latinos and

Asians. Latinos are 67% less likely than Asians to speak both a combination of languages and English only at home, compared to speaking a language other than English only.

In terms of control variables, respondents whose parents have attained a college degree or higher, cohabiting individuals, and individuals who grew up in a step-family are more likely to speak English only to their children, as compared to speaking another language at home.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The goal of this study was to better understand how relationship quality, parenting attitudes, and language usage varies by immigrant generation and race/ethnicity in the United States. How do the familial relationships of the first and second generation compare to the third generation during young adulthood? Is it a story of assimilation or cultural difference?

### *Role of Immigrant Generation*

With regard to romantic relationship quality, the results suggest that first, second, and third generation young adults closely resemble one another. The only generational difference is found with regard to sexual satisfaction, and members of the first generation are more likely to be sexually satisfied than members of the third, a somewhat surprising finding. The results suggest, therefore, that the context of romantic relationships is similar for individuals who spent their adolescence in the United States regardless of immigration status, as members of all three generations appear to be evaluating relationships by a similar standard. While Add Health has extensive relationship quality measures, it would be interesting to pursue in greater depth the expectations individuals hold toward romantic relationships. It may be that there are differences in relationship

expectations by immigrant generation, which are not captured in these relationship quality measures examined here. Future studies should also explore and examine if the lack of differences in romantic relationship quality still remain as the individuals continue through their life course. This sample is relatively young so it is not clear if the similarity in quality will also hold as individuals age.

When attention is turned to parenting, the results mirror the results for relationship quality. There do not appear to be generational differences with regard to parental contentment and stress; members of all three generations seem to hold similar levels of contentment and stress. I do, however, find a different story with regard to language usage among children. Members of the first and second generation are less likely than members of the third generation to speak English only at home. In addition, members of the first generation are less likely than members of the second generation to speak English in combination with another language and English only at home. These results support assimilation theories in which each successive generation is more assimilated into American culture (Waters and Jimenez 2005; Zhou 1997). These results suggest that members of the first and second generation, and particularly members of the first generation, still want to pass along part of their cultural heritage to their children.

#### *Role of Race/Ethnicity*

While this paper adds to the literature with regard to generational differences, it also broadens our knowledge of racial and ethnic differences in romantic relationship quality and parenting. Consistent with previous literature (Broman 2005; Broman 1993; Dillaway and Broman 2001), this study found that Blacks report lower levels of relationship quality (satisfaction, partner affection, and contentment) than whites. This

paper, however, also included Latinos and Asians. I found that there are no differences in romantic relationship quality between Asians and whites, and that Latinos only significantly differed from whites with regard to satisfaction; Latinos were less likely to be satisfied than whites. The question that remains unanswered from this analysis is why there are differences by ethnicity. The differences in reported quality may be due to different behaviors within relationships between ethnic groups; Broman (2005) found that Blacks and whites experience differing levels of positive and negative behaviors (i.e. spouse has affairs, wastes money, hits or pushes), and these factors explain the association between race and quality for Blacks and whites. It may be, therefore, that the behaviors and interactions within romantic relationships drive the romantic relationship quality differences between ethnic groups. It is also possible that the measures of race-ethnicity are capturing additional aspects of economic disadvantage that are not encompassed by financial hardship and educational attainment. Future work can build upon this work by examining whether or not negative behaviors within romantic unions explain ethnic differences in romantic relationship quality across all subgroups. In addition, to better understand the role that culture may play as an explanation in the reported racial/ethnic differences in romantic relationship quality, cultural factors, such as familism, should also be examined. Finally, this study only examined four aspects of romantic relationship quality. There are still many other aspects of romantic relationship quality that can be examined, such as conflict, across all racial and ethnic groups within the United States.

Somewhat surprisingly I did not find any differences with regard to race/ethnicity and parent's levels of contentment and stress, once all controls were included in the

model. I did, however, find differences with regard to language usage. Asians and Latinos are less likely than whites to speak English only at home to their children, and Latinos are more likely than Asians to speak a language other than English at home (and also less likely to speak English only, or English and another language). The differences between Asians and Latinos with regard to language usage are interesting because it suggests that their experiences with regard to assimilating to American culture differ.

Findings from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey seem to support the differences found in this study with regard to language usage between Latinos and Asians. Zhou and Xiong (2005) found that approximately 75% of second generation Asian young adults prefer to speak English only while Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, and Haller (2005) found that approximately 65% of second generation Latino and Caribbean young adults prefer to speak English only. In addition, 82% of Latino and Caribbean second generation young adults want their children to be bilingual (Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, and Haller 2005) whereas slightly more than half of Asian second generation young adults wanted their children to be bilingual (Zhou and Xiong 2005). Some of the differences in language usage with children may also be due to differences in proficiency in native languages; Zhou and Xiong found that less than 25 percent of second generation Asian young adults were proficient in their native language. Future work should seek to better understand why these differences in language usage develop between Latinos and Asians. Are the differences solely due to fluency in a native tongue? If the differences are not solely due to proficiency differences, research is needed to explain why Latinos have a greater desire to pass along linguistic ties to their ethnic and cultural backgrounds than Asians do. It may be that Latinos broader kinship networks in the United States

contribute to the continuation of ethnic linguistic ties, or it may be that Spanish-speaking ability is viewed as an asset for American children by parents while speaking an Asian language is not.

While this study provides insights into whether parenting varies across subgroups in the United States, this paper was not able to examine much with regard to parenting behaviors, other than language usage with children. It would be very interesting to see if and how parenting behaviors vary, both in terms of immigrant generation and race/ethnicity. Similarly, this sample is composed of young adults, so their children are still, on average, young. Future work should examine if attitudes toward parenting remain similar as both the parents and children age, as well as the language choices parents make when their children are older.

#### *Concluding Remarks*

In sum, this study makes significant contributions to the family literature by examining romantic relationship quality and parenting by immigrant generation and race/ethnicity, an understudied topic in the United States. This study broadens our understanding of family relationships across sub-groups within the United States. The results suggest that romantic relationship quality varies by race/ethnicity, but not by immigrant generation. This finding is an important one because there has been a lack of knowledge in the family literature with regard to the processes within the romantic relationships of immigrants (Glick 2010). In addition, this study indicates that there are not differences in parenting views by immigrant generation or race/ethnicity. This finding is significant because it indicates that structural factors, particularly a parent's relationship type and SES, are more important than cultural factors in the formation of



parenting views. Finally, while the results from the language usage with children support assimilation literature, they also suggest that the assimilation process for specific ethnic sub-groups differs. This distinction is important as it reinforces the importance of studying specific ethnic groups to understand how family life operates in the United States. This distinction becomes even more important in light of the increasing diversity of the United States' population.

While this paper broadens our understanding of romantic relationship quality and parenting across all immigrant generations and racial/ethnic groups in the United States, the ideal analysis would be one in which the different ethnic groups within the Latino and Asian categories could be examined individually (i.e. Mexicans separate from Cubans, Chinese separate from Filipinos). Future work can hopefully build upon this work by examining whether there are differences within each specific ethnic sub-group in both romantic relationship quality and parenting.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE ROLE OF SOCIALIZATION AND PERSONALITY IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP QUALITY IN YOUNG ADULTHOOD**

Researchers have long sought to understand the development of high quality, close interpersonal relationships because of the important role satisfying relationships play in both emotional and physical well-being (Gottman 1998; House, Landis, and Umberson 1988). Competency in relationships not only matters for the individuals involved in each relationship, but it also can have an impact on others, especially children. Divorce, marital distress, and difficulties in cohabiting unions can have negative emotional, physical, behavioral, social, and/or economic consequences for partners and their children (Harold and Conger 1997; House, Landis, and Umberson 1988; Leonard and Roberts 1998; Noller and Freeney 1998; Simon and Marcussen 1999).

Explanations for successful close personal relationships, particularly romantic relationships, have focused on two theoretical mechanisms: socialization processes and personality traits. The socialization perspective suggests that the patterns of relating to romantic partners are based on experiences in the family of origin while a personality-based perspective suggests that individuals have relatively enduring personality traits, which are crucial for understanding behavior in any relationship, including romantic ones. Few studies have been able to tease apart the impact that both socialization and personality have on relationship satisfaction and interactions, as most studies have tended

to focus on one theory over the other, and few have representative data to test both. Some researchers, though, have created models which account both for experiences in the family of origin and personality characteristics as determinants of romantic relationships (Bryant and Conger 2002). Bryant and Conger's "Development of Early Adult Romantic Relationships (DEARR)" model has only been tested by data that come from a longitudinal study of 451 rural white families. While these tests provide much insight into how both the family of origin and personality influence early adult romantic relationships, the data are not nationally-representative so it is unclear if such a model works for the entire American population.

This study seeks to build upon this scant research on the role of socialization and personality in the development of romantic relationships in young adulthood. In order to test a model that accounts for both experiences in the family of origin and personality traits, a data set is needed that is longitudinal with data collected in childhood/adolescence and into adulthood to provide prospective data rather than retrospective data with regard to the family of origin. Longitudinal data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) make it possible to examine the association between the family of origin and young romantic relationships and to examine whether or not socialization operates through personality. Add Health is a nationally-representative study of more than 20,000 adolescents in grades seven through twelve in the United States in 1995 with the fourth wave of data collected in 2008 when respondents were young adults. During the first wave of data collection, respondents not only completed questionnaires, but one parent was asked to complete a parent questionnaire as well. Therefore, it is possible to examine how both the parent-child

relationship during adolescence and the parental romantic relationship during adolescence are related to young adult romantic relationships. Add Health's national representativeness, large sample size, and longitudinal design make it an ideal study for exploring relationship trajectories during the transition to adulthood.

This study uses data from Add Health to examine whether patterns of interaction within the family of origin are associated with an individual's interactions with romantic partners, while also examining whether the family of origin still matters after accounting for personality. This study will contribute to a greater understanding of the underlying mechanisms of romantic relationships by bridging two extensive streams of research on the family to advance knowledge on the role that the family of origin and stable personality traits play in the development of romantic relationships in young adulthood.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Theoretical Framework: Socialization**

Much of the work on socialization draws from the works of Bandura, who has written extensively on the concept of social learning. Bandura (1977) emphasizes the importance of observation in social learning, for he believes that social learning is the learning that results from the observation of others' behavior and the reproduction of that observed behavior. Many theoretical models of romantic relationships have incorporated pre-relationship predictors into their frameworks, such as parent-child relationships and previous romantic relationship history (Bryant and Conger 2002, Huston and Houts 1998, Karney and Bradbury 1995), and many researchers have found that the patterns of relating to partners in adulthood are rooted in family of origin experiences (Amato and Booth 2001; Conger et al. 2000). This research typically is divided into two strands:

some of the research focuses on the parent-child relationship while some focuses on the modeling of behavior learned from observing parents' interactions with one another.

Some socialization research has focused on the role that the parent-child relationship may have in the child's romantic relationship development. In particular, it is argued that an individual's skills in intimate communication, such as problem solving and conflict management, that are related to both success and failure in romantic relationships may be influenced by interactions in the family of origin (Feldman, Gowen, and Fisher 1998; Sanders, Halford, and Behrens 1999). The first researchers who have been able to assess this relationship between the family of origin and romantic relationship skills with longitudinal data have used the same data that Bryant and Conger tested in the DEARR model. The data come from a prospective longitudinal study from Iowa (for details on the initial study, see Conger and Elder 1994). The study started in 1989, when the targeted participants were in seventh grade. The study followed target participants families, and 451 families in Iowa participated in the first wave. In 1997, the target participants were interviewed again, with a romantic partner if they had one. 210 of the original targeted seventh graders reported being in a heterosexual romantic relationship at this time point.

The DEARR model posits that the family of origin will affect the development of early adult romantic relationships through its influence on an individual's 1) social and economic circumstances and 2) individual characteristics (Bryant and Conger 2002). In particular, the model proposes that the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional characteristics within the family of origin influence adult romantic relationship development, either directly or indirectly. According to the DEARR model, cognitions form the template that individuals use when they process events in their intimate

relationships. These templates are formed and learned in the family of origin (Bryant and Conger 2002). The model also proposes that the interactions within the family of origin will have an independent effect on later romantic relationships. In particular, the model posits that three dimensions of behavior within the family of origin are of particular importance: 1) negative, hostile, or coercive behaviors, 2) problem-solving skills, and 3) nurturance and involvement. Children are socialized along these three dimensions in childhood and adolescence within their family of origin, and children who learn how to interact and behave appropriately should be more skilled in future romantic relationships than children who do not learn appropriate behaviors (Bryant and Conger 2002).

In general, research using these data supports the idea that the family of origin influences an individual's future romantic relationships. Conger et al. (2000) found that parenting that occurs in developmentally appropriate and warm relationships leads to interpersonal styles that foster close relationships in the child generation; that is, adolescents reared in nurturing and supportive families exhibited more supportive and less hostile behaviors toward partners (Conger et al. 2000) and children whose parents were involved and nurturing had higher competence in romantic relationships, after controlling for individual differences (Donnellan, Larsen-Rife, and Conger 2005).

Based on previous socialization research, it seems likely that individuals may use the relationship styles they learned from their parents in adolescence in their own close, intimate relationships in young adulthood. This theory would predict that individuals who report higher levels of satisfaction with their communication with parents in adolescence will also report higher levels of satisfaction with solving disagreements and handling financial matters in romantic relationships in young adulthood because these individuals

will have greater communication skills and the ability to work through potentially contentious matters. Similarly, it is expected that individuals will experience similar levels of affection in close relationships throughout their life course. Individuals who have warm, supportive relationships with parents will be more likely to expect and develop this type of close relationship in other relationships. Hence, individuals who reported higher levels of love and affection with their parents are likely to report higher levels of closeness and caring in their romantic relationships.

While socialization research indicates that the parent-child relationship is important for understanding a child's adult romantic relationship quality, socialization research also indicates the importance of modeling parents' behaviors. Some researchers believe that observational learning and a subsequent modeling of interactions between parents explains how parents' relationships can affect a child's behavior in later romantic relationships (Amato and Booth 2001, Sanders, Halford, and Behrens 1999). Research that has focused on this aspect of socialization has often centered around divorce (Amato 1996; Amato and Booth 2001; Cui, Fincham, and Pasley 2008; Herzog and Cooney 2002; Sanders, Halford, and Behrens 1999; Stocker and Richmond 2007; Yu and Adler-Baeder 2007). Children of divorced parents are at a greater risk for marital difficulties and divorce, which suggests that there may be an intergenerational transmission of marital quality (Amato 1996). This transmission between generations may not be limited solely to marital relationships as parental divorce has been linked to more negative views of romantic relationships and more problematic communication styles in romantic relationships (Herzog and Cooney 2002; Sanders, Halford, and Behrens 1999). The association between parental divorce and children of divorced parents' future romantic

relationships may be due to the interactions between the divorced parents, not the divorce itself. Cui, Fincham, and Pasley (2008) found that parental marital conflict is associated with their children's conflict behavior, which in turn is linked to report of lower relationship quality. Stocker and Richmond (2007) found that hostility in parents' marital relationships is related to the levels of hostility in adolescents' romantic relationships. In addition, Yu and Adler-Baeder (2007) discovered that the quality within parental remarriages has a greater influence on adult children's relationships than the divorce that preceded the remarriage, which further suggests that the interactions and quality within relationships, not divorce itself, have a greater influence on children's subsequent romantic relationships.

Based on previous research, it seems likely that the quality of a parent's romantic relationship during their children's adolescence will influence the development of children's adult romantic relationships. Socialization theory, therefore, predicts that individuals whose parents report high levels of happiness in their romantic relationships will report higher levels of happiness in their romantic relationships in young adulthood. Similarly, it is expected that individuals whose parents report high levels of fighting in their romantic relationships will report lower levels of satisfaction in dealing with disagreements. Finally, it is also expected that individuals whose parents discussed separating in the previous year will report lower levels of commitment and belief that their current romantic relationships are permanent.

### **Theoretical Framework: Personality**

While considerable attention has been paid to the impact socialization may have on romantic relationship quality, a large body of work has focused on the role of



personality traits, known as the Individual Difference Perspective. Personality is thought of as both dynamic and interactional, as it shapes early socialization experiences and is shaped by those experiences (Asendorpf 2002). Personality is crucial for understanding behavior in romantic relationships, because personality traits are relatively enduring (Bradbury and Fincham 1988; Karney and Bradbury 1995; Robins, Caspi, and Moffitt 2002). In line with this view is the thought that some people will be generally happy, or unhappy, across relationships, which can partially be attributed to stable differences in personality across individuals (Robins, Caspi, and Moffitt 2002). As Robins, Caspi, and Moffitt (2002) note, “it is not just who you are with that matters, but who you are” (p. 926).

In a review of longitudinal research on marriage, Karney and Bradbury (1995) discovered that 56 traits have been examined with regard to marital quality. Psychometric analyses place these 56 traits into five factors, known as the Big 5 personality dimensions. One of the Big 5 dimensions, neuroticism, known as negative affectivity, showed greater effect on marital outcomes than the other four factors (extraversion, impulsivity, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) (Karney and Bradbury 1995). Neuroticism is the tendency to report distress, discomfort, and dissatisfaction over time and regardless of the situation (Donnellan, Conger, and Bryant 2004). Neuroticism has been linked to less marital satisfaction (Caughlin, Huston and Houts 2000), negative global marital evaluations (Donnellan, Conger, and Bryant 2004) and negative interactions in marriages (Donnellan, Conger, and Bryant 2004). In addition, low negative emotionality predicts relationship happiness for both men and women (Robins, Caspi, and Moffitt 2000).

While personality factors other than neuroticism show weaker and less consistent effects on marital relationships (Asendorpf 2002), Donnellan, Conger, and Bryant (2004) argue it is important to study the positive aspects of personality too. Agreeable individuals may be better able to regulate their emotions during interactions, which may lead to smoother encounters with romantic partners. In addition, agreeable individuals' personality may lead to both fewer and less intense negative interactions (Donnellan, Conger, and Bryant 2004). In addition, conscientious individuals may have self-control that helps manage conflicts while individuals low in conscientiousness may escalate negative interaction, by responding rashly (Robins, Caspi, and Moffitt 2000). Furthermore, individuals high in openness may be more flexible and more willing to analyze their relationships, which might facilitate the resolution of conflicts (Donnellan, Conger, and Bryant 2004). There is some support for these theorized relationships between these dimensions and relationship quality. Donnellan, Conger, and Bryant (2004) found that both agreeableness and openness were negatively correlated with negative marital interactions while Robins, Caspi, and Moffitt (2000) found women's relationship happiness can be predicted by high positive emotionality (agreeableness) and high constraint (conscientiousness). In addition, Robins, Caspi, and Moffitt (2000) found that low negative emotionality (neuroticism), high positive emotionality (agreeableness), and high constraint (conscientiousness) both concurrently and longitudinally predict successful relationships, and they also predict improvements in relationships over time.

### **Bridging Socialization and Personality Frameworks**

While much of the research on romantic relationships has utilized either socialization or personality as the main framework, some researchers have started to

examine the impact that both earlier experiences and personality have on close relationships. According to the DEARR model, cognitions form the template that individuals use when they process events in their intimate relationships. These templates are formed and learned early in the family of origin, and the interactional processes in the family of origin influence later romantic relationship development. The model also accounts for an individual's personality traits, such as neuroticism, as mediators of the relationship between the family of origin and early adulthood romantic relationships (Bryant and Conger 2002).

### **Importance of Studying Romantic Relationship Quality**

Much of the research on socialization has focused upon divorce (Amato 1996; Amato and Booth 2001; Cui, Fincham, and Pasley 2008; Herzog and Cooney 2002; Sanders, Halford, and Behrens 1999; Stocker and Richmond 2007; Yu and Adler-Baeder 2007). Studies of divorce can be seen as indicators of romantic relationship quality, as the dissolution of a marriage may be viewed as the ultimate benchmark of a non-functioning union. While divorce is certainly an indicator of romantic relationship quality, it does not account for all aspects of quality within romantic unions. The quality within relationships has important health and social consequences (Gottman 1998; House, Landis, and Umberson 1988) so it is important to study factors that are associated with it.

It is important to note that relationship quality is an ambiguous term, as it encompasses both objective and subjective measures of quality within romantic relationships. Measures of romantic relationship quality range from positive aspects, such as satisfaction and love, to negative aspects, such as arguing and physical violence. Willets (2006) believes that focusing on only one indicator of relationship quality ignores

the multidimensional nature of the concept. In this study I focus on four different aspects of romantic relationship quality: satisfaction, partner's affection, happiness, and future relationship orientation. This focus allows me to make significant contributions to the romantic relationship quality literature because it broadens our understanding of the association between socialization, personality, and multiple dimensions of romantic relationship quality.

### **Purpose of Study**

In order to understand how individuals form high quality romantic relationships in young adulthood, it is important to model both family of origin experiences and personality simultaneously, as both have been found to influence romantic relationship quality. This study is particularly interested in the role that experiences in the family of origin may play on subsequent romantic relationship quality. In order to better understand the importance of socialization, it is vital to control for personality because the impact of the family of origin on romantic relationships in young adulthood may operate through personality. Personality traits, if stable, are at least partially inherited from parents and represent a factor that can explain both an individual's child-parent interactions in adolescence and interactions with romantic partners and children in young adulthood. Without accounting for personality, the link between experiences in adolescence and relationships in young adulthood may be spurious and due to shared personality traits. In order to examine whether personality explains the relationship between the family of origin and interactions in adulthood, the research design requires data on both early experiences and personality in the study of relationship development. The expected

relationship between the family of origin, personality, and outcomes in young adulthood can be observed in conceptual models displayed in Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2.

This study seeks to examine the role that both (1) parent-child interactions (Figure 3.1) and (2) parents' relationship quality during adolescence (Figure 3.2) play in romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. In Figure 3.1, two aspects of relationship quality with romantic partners in young adulthood are examined: satisfaction and partner's affection, which, in turn, correspond to two aspects of parent-child interactions in adolescence, satisfaction with communication and affection. This model is the "traditional" socialization model. In the second panel of Figure 3.1, I build upon this model by accounting for the respondent's Big 5 Personality traits. Personality is thought to be partially heritable (Tellegen et al. 1988) so including personality in the model helps account for unobserved factors that parents and children share (i.e. parents and children share genes and genes influence part of personality) that influence the relationship between the parent-child interactions and young adult child romantic relationship quality. I argue that the Big 5 explain part of the association between the family of origin and romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. Personality, however, is not fully inherited, which means that personality is most likely also formed by the environment within the family of origin, which is why I model the relationship between personality and socialization with an arrow going in both directions. Finally, I anticipate that both the family of origin and personality will shape romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. In the third panel of Figure 3.1, I control for measures that assess the family of origin context, such as family structure and parents' educational attainment, along with

factors known to be associated with relationships such as gender, race, and relationship type.

Figure 3.2 shows the model for the role that parental relationship quality has in relation to a child's romantic relationships in young adulthood. Three aspects of relationship quality with romantic partners in young adulthood are examined: happiness, satisfaction with disagreements, and future orientation, which correspond to three aspects of parental relationship quality, happiness, levels of fights, and thoughts of separation. Again, in the second panel of Figure 3.2, I account for the respondent's Big 5 Personality traits, and in the third panel, I include the controls.

## **METHODS**

### **Data**

Data come from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), which is an on-going nationally-representative sample of individuals who were in 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade in 1995. The last wave of data, the fourth wave, was collected in 2008 when individuals ranged in age from 24 to 32. Add Health used a cluster sample design that was both school-based and multi-stage. The study began in Wave I, in 1994-1995, with an in-school questionnaire that was administered to a nationally representative sample of seventh through twelfth graders. The in-school questionnaire was completed by more than 90,000 adolescents. Add Health then used school rosters to randomly select 200 students from each school to participate in in-home interviews, along with a number of oversamples (e.g. race, ethnicity, disability, and genetic). Wave I's total sample size for in-home interviews is 20,745 adolescents. In addition, at Wave I a parent (preferably the mother) was asked to complete a parent questionnaire, with an 85% response rate. At

Wave IV, over 80% of original Wave I respondents were re-interviewed, resulting in a sample size of 15,701 individuals.

The fact that this sample is longitudinal and nationally-representative, with measures on the relationship with parents in adolescence, parents' assessments of their current romantic relationships, extensive measures on romantic relationships in young adulthood, and personality measures make it an ideal dataset for exploring the role that socialization and personality play in the development of relationship quality in young adulthood. For additional information on the Add Health study, see Harris et al. (2009).

This study uses data from both the Wave I and Wave IV surveys. The samples for this analysis differ, depending upon the research question. For both research questions, the analysis is limited to individuals who participated in both waves and who have valid personality measures and sampling weights. For the question that addresses the role of parent-child interactions in adolescence in the development of romantic relationship quality in young adulthood, only those individuals who were in a current dating, cohabiting, or marital relationship at the collection of the Wave IV survey, answered all of the romantic relationship quality questions, and answered all of the parental relationship quality question in adolescence are included. 9,021 respondents are classified as being in a current romantic relationship; however, of these respondents 234 are missing data on at least one of the key indicators and 579 have missing weights. The sample size for this analysis is 8,208.

For the question that addresses the role of a parent's reported romantic relationship quality in adolescence, I use data from a parent questionnaire that was collected at Wave I. Only those individuals who were in a current dating, cohabiting, or

marital relationship at the collection of the Wave IV survey, answered all of the romantic relationship quality questions, and had a parent who filled out the Wave I parent questionnaire are included. Again, 9,021 respondents are classified as being in a current romantic relationship; however, of these respondents 3,092 do not have a parent's reported relationship quality from the Wave I Parent Questionnaire<sup>13</sup>, 155 are missing data on at least one of the key indicators, and 344 have missing weights. The sample size for this analysis is 5,430.

## **Measures**

### ***Parent-Child Relationship Socialization***

Table 3.1 provides means for all measures in the first stage of analysis that examines the association between parent-child relationship and romantic relationship quality in young adulthood (Figure 3.1). Means are presented for the entire sample, as well as by relationship type. For all measures, a higher value indicates a higher level of each measure (i.e. on a 5-point scale of satisfaction, a 1 would indicate low levels of satisfaction while a 5 would indicate high levels of satisfaction). Measures whose original question wording led to scales where lower numbers would indicate higher levels of the measure were reverse-coded.

### ***Dependent Variables: Romantic Relationship Quality in Young Adulthood***

Two measures of relationship quality have been constructed from the Wave IV questionnaire for this analysis: satisfaction and partner's affection. Satisfaction is

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<sup>13</sup> These 3,092 respondents are missing a parent's romantic relationship quality because no parent interview was completed (N=1,416), or because the parent was not in a current romantic relationship and had no romantic relationship data (N=1,676). Respondents whose parents did not complete a parent interview during Wave I differed significantly from respondents whose parents did complete the interview on several measures of the dependent variables: they reported both lower levels of satisfaction and partner affection in their romantic relationships in young adulthood. They did not, however, differ significantly in terms of personality.



measured from two questions: respondents were asked on a 5-point scale to rate their satisfaction with the way in which the respondent and partner handle problems and disagreements and their satisfaction with the way in which the respondent and partner handle family finances. A measure for overall satisfaction was created, which is the mean of the responses to the two items<sup>14</sup>. Married individuals report the highest level of satisfaction, when comparing mean scores by relationship type.

Partner's affection is also measured from two questions: respondents were asked on a 5-point scale to rate their agreement with the following two statements: my partner listens to me when I need someone to talk to and my partner expresses love and affection to me. A measure for overall partner affection was created, which is the mean of the responses to the two items<sup>15</sup>. Reported affection does not vary by relationship type.

*Main Explanatory Variable of Interest: Relationship with Parents in Adolescence*

The quality of respondents' relationship with their parents in adolescence is assessed through two measures from the Wave I questionnaire, satisfaction with communication and affection<sup>16</sup>. I chose these two aspects of socialization because these measures parallel the romantic relationship quality measures in young adulthood.

Satisfaction with communication is measured by the mean response of the respondent's reported satisfaction with the level of communication with both his or her mother and

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<sup>14</sup> I also examined a measure that took the simple sum of the two scales for satisfaction. Results were consistent with the average measure in all models.

<sup>15</sup> I also examined a measure that took the simple sum of the two scales for partner's affection. Results were consistent with the average measure in all models.

<sup>16</sup> These measures are based on the adolescent's perspective of the relationship with parents. In the parent-child relationship, there are two perspectives: that of the child and the parent. I chose to present only the child's perspective of the relationship, since it is the child that also reports on perceptions of romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. I did, though, also examine a parent's perception of the relationship, and the results are similar. In addition, I also examined an overall socialization scale, as opposed to looking at specific aspects of socialization, and results again were similar.

father while affection in the parent-child relationship is measured by the mean response of the reported levels of closeness, caring, and warmth in the relationship with both the respondent's mother and father.

### *Personality*

Personality was assessed through the Big 5, which are 5 constructed measures based on responses to personality scales: Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness. Add Health constructed these measures from the Mini-IPIP, a 20-item short form based on the 50-item International Personality Item Pool five-factor model (Donnellan et al. 2006). There are four items, which are scaled on a 5-point-Likert scale, for each dimension. Scores therefore range from 4 to 20 for each personality dimension.

### *Control Variables:*

In order to fully understand the relationship between the parent-child relationship in adolescence and partner relationship quality in young adulthood, I control for several factors that are also likely to shape responses to relationship quality questions in young adulthood. First, I control for the respondent's relationship type. Respondents were asked to report on the partners with whom they had a romantic or sexual relationships. For each listed partner, respondents were asked to report on the type of the relationship (i.e. married, cohabiting, dating) and whether or not the relationship was current. In the rare instance when individuals listed more than one "current" relationship, I selected the relationship that corresponded to the first listed partner. In this sample, 69% of respondents are married, 20% are cohabiting, and 11% are dating.

In addition, I control for basic demographic factors (immigrant generation, race/ethnicity, sex, and age) that are correlated with both parent-child interactions in adolescence and romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. The measure for immigrant generation was created from nativity questions in the Wave I, Wave II, in-school, and parent questionnaire (see Harris 1999). Respondents who were not born in the United States and whose parents were foreign born were classified as Generation 1. Respondents who were born in the United States and who had at least one foreign born parent were classified as Generation 2. Finally, respondents who were born in the United States and whose parents were born in the United States were classified as Generation 3. Race and ethnicity were self-reported by respondents at Wave I. Add Health allows for rich measures in terms of race and ethnicity, but for this analysis I classify respondents into 5 racial/ethnic groups. Respondents could be classified as: Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, Asian, Latino, and Other (including Native American). A dummy variable measures sex, where a 0=female and a 1=male. This measure was constructed from the Wave I questionnaire. Age is measured at the time of the Wave IV interview and ranges from 24 to 32.

In addition, I control for a respondent's educational attainment, financial hardship, and previous relationship history, which impact relationship quality in young adulthood. A respondent's educational attainment was measured by a dummy variable created from the Wave IV questionnaire, which indicated whether a respondent had attained a college degree or higher = 1 or whether the respondent had attained less than a college degree = 0. Hardship is assessed by an index of six items that indicates financial hardship: whether in the past year the respondent was without phone service, couldn't

pay the full rent or mortgage, was evicted, didn't pay a full utility bill, had utilities shut off, or worried that food would run out, ranging from 0 = none of these had happened to 6 = all of these had happened. I chose to use hardship, rather than income, to control for the relationship between socioeconomic status and relationship quality because previous work suggests that quality is more responsive to subjective economic measures, such as perceived hardship, than objective measures, such as income (White and Rogers 2000).

I assessed whether or not a respondent had previously cohabited through a dummy variable constructed from the Wave IV questionnaire. For those who are currently cohabiting, a respondent was classified as having previously cohabited if they listed more than one cohabitation in their list of total relationships. For those who are currently married and dating, a respondent was classified as previously cohabited if they listed at least one cohabitation in their list of total relationships. Similarly, I assessed whether or not a respondent had previously married through a dummy variable constructed from the Wave IV questionnaire. For those who are currently married, a respondent was classified as having previously married if they listed more than one marriage in their list of relationships. For those who are currently cohabiting and dating, a respondent was classified as previously married if they listed at least one marriage in their list of total relationships.

Finally, I also control for the family of origin's family structure and the educational attainment of a respondent's parents, which impacts relationships both in adolescence and adulthood. The respondent's family structure during adolescence is measured by 5 dummy variables, which were constructed from the Wave I questionnaire. Respondents can be classified as living with: 2 biological or adoptive parents, one

biological and one step-parent, single mother, single father, and two step-parents or other family (respondents in this category could be living with two step-parents, foster parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings or other adults who act as parent figures). A respondent's parents' educational attainment was measured by a dummy variable created from the Wave I questionnaire, which indicated whether either parent had attained a college degree or higher =1 or whether the respondents' parents had attained less than a college degree = 0.

### ***Parental Relationship Satisfaction***

Table 3.2 provides means for all measures in the second stage of analysis that examines how socialization from parental relationship quality is associated with romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. Means are presented for the entire sample, as well as by relationship type.

### ***Dependent Variables: Romantic Relationship Quality in Young Adulthood***

I use different measures of young adult relationship quality for this question to parallel quality measures from parents' relationships: happiness, satisfaction with resolution of disagreements, and future relationship orientation, measured at Wave IV. Happiness is measured through one question: respondents were asked on a 3-point scale to indicate how happy they were in their relationship with their partner. This measure was highly skewed, with approximately 75% of respondents indicating that they were very happy with the relationship. Therefore a dichotomous measure was created where 1 = very happy and 0 = fairly happy and not too happy. Married individuals report the highest level of happiness, when comparing mean scores by relationship type.

Satisfaction with resolution of disagreements is measured from one question: respondents were asked on a 5-point scale to rate their satisfaction with the way in which the respondent and partner handle problems and disagreements. Married individuals report the highest level of satisfaction, when comparing mean scores by relationship type.

Future relationship orientation is measured through two questions: respondents were asked on a 4-point scale to indicate how committed they were to their romantic relationship, and they were asked on a 5-point scale to indicate how likely it is that their relationship will be a permanent one. A measure for future relationship orientation was created, which is the mean of the response to the two items.<sup>17</sup> Married individuals were the most likely to believe in the future orientation of the relationship, when comparing mean scores by relationship type.

*Main Explanatory Variable of Interest: Parental Relationship Quality*

The quality of a parent's reported relationship quality during the respondent's adolescence is assessed through three measures from the Wave I parental questionnaire: happiness, levels of fighting, and thoughts of separation. Happiness is measured through one question: parents were asked to indicate on a 10-point scale how happy they would rate their current romantic relationship. Due to skew toward happiness, this measure was recoded as a dichotomous measure where 0 = 1 through 8 while 1 = 9 and 10 on the scale. Level of fighting is measured through one question: parents were asked to indicate on a 4-point scale how much they fight with their current partner. Finally, thoughts of separation were measured through one question: parents were asked to indicate whether

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<sup>17</sup> I also examined a measure that took the simple sum of the two scales for future orientation. Results were consistent with the average measure in all models.

or not they had talked to their partner about separating in the past year. This measure was coded so that a 1 = yes while a 0 = no.

### *Control Variables*

Personality factors are again added to the model to better understand the relationship between parental relationship quality and young adult romantic relationship quality. I control for relationship type, immigrant generation, race/ethnicity, sex, age, family structure, college degree, parents' college degree, and hardship. The measures for these variables are the same as previously described in the measures section. The one new control variable I examined in this analysis was the family of origin's report of hardship during adolescence. This measure was constructed from two questions from the Wave I Parent Questionnaire. The parent was asked to indicate whether or not the family had received public assistance in the previous year and whether or not the family had enough money to pay all bills. I included this measure as a control, as I thought the family of origin's financial circumstances may help explain the parent's reported relationship quality. This measure was coded so that a 1=not enough money to pay all bills, receipt of public assistance, or both while a 0=no reports of economic hardship.

### **Analytic Strategy**

In this paper, I examine two different aspects of socialization: (1) the reported relationship quality between the respondent and his or her parent during adolescence and (2) the reported relationship quality between one parent and his or her relationship partner during the respondent's adolescence, enabling me to address two hypotheses about the role of socialization and personality in the development of young adult romantic relationships. I use linear regression to estimate interval-scaled dependent

variables and logistic regression to estimate dichotomous dependent variables. I use ordinary least squares regression to assess the relationship between the parent-child relationship during adolescence and reported levels of satisfaction and partner's affection in romantic relationships in young adulthood. I use logistic regression for models that examine the relationship between parental relationship quality and reported levels of happiness in romantic relationships. I also use ordinary least squares regression to assess the relationship between parents' relationship quality and respondents' future orientation and satisfaction with handling disagreements in romantic relationships.

I first examine the bivariate relationship between each socialization measure and romantic relationship quality measure (Panel 1 in Figure 3.1 and 3.2). I then add personality to this baseline model in order to examine if personality accounts for the relationship between the family of origin and romantic relationship quality in young adulthood (Panel 2 in Figure 3.1 and 3.2). Finally, I examine the relationship between each socialization measure, personality dimension, and romantic quality measure, controlling for demographic and relationship characteristics (Panel 3 in Figure 3.1 and 3.2).

In addition, I also examined whether or not there were differences in the association between socialization and relationship quality for married, cohabiting, and dating individuals. Marriage and cohabitation are often treated as fundamentally different relationships in the family literature. Therefore, I tested for differences by running Chow tests and interacting relationship type and socialization factors. A Chow test is a statistical test that evaluates whether coefficients from a regression model are significantly different from one another across subsamples (in this case, across



relationship type) (Chow 1960). Including interaction terms within an aggregate model (i.e., interacting relationship type with socialization factors in a model predicting relationship quality) provides a second test of interaction. A Chow test reports whether the entire process differs by relationship type while specific interactions in a regression test for whether there are differences in specific socialization factors by relationship type. Results from the Chow tests indicated that there were not any significant differences by relationship type for the analyses that predicted satisfaction, partner's affection, happiness, and satisfaction with disagreement. I also did not find any significant interactions in these analyses, either. There were, however, significant differences by relationship type for the analysis that predicted future orientation. Socialization (i.e. parents discussed separation in the previous year) was only significantly related to married individual's future orientation. Therefore, I separated the analysis for this aspect of relationship quality by relationship type.

## **RESULTS**

### ***Parent-Child Relationship Socialization Results***

Table 3.3 presents the coefficients from the models of relationship satisfaction regressed on communication with parents, personality and other key background factors for relationship quality. The results support previous literature that socialization is related to romantic relationship quality in adulthood. In all three models, satisfaction with parental communication in adolescence is significantly related to romantic relationship satisfaction in young adulthood. Higher levels of satisfaction with parental communication in adolescence are significantly related to higher levels of reported satisfaction in romantic relationships in young adulthood. With each one point increase in

the average communication score with parents, the average satisfaction in the relationship between young adult partners increases by 0.12 of a point. In a model that accounts for personality, with each one point increase in average communication with parents, the average satisfaction in romantic relationships increases by 0.09 of a point. There is, therefore, a one-fourth reduction in the coefficient for the socialization measure, which suggests that part of the association between socialization and satisfaction in romantic relationships is due to personality. However, this effect is very small to begin with. Neuroticism is negatively related to reported relationship satisfaction while extraversion and conscientiousness are positively related to it. Neuroticism, however, appears to be the most important personality trait. The relationships between extraversion and conscientiousness with reported relationship satisfaction are much weaker. The relationship between parental communication and reported romantic relationship satisfaction holds when key demographic and background factors are included as controls in Model 3.

In addition, the results from the other control variable are consistent with previous literature. Blacks and Latinos report lower levels of satisfaction, as compared to whites, while dating and cohabiting individuals report lower levels of satisfaction, as compared to married individuals. Finally, individuals who have attained a college degree or higher report higher levels of satisfaction than individuals who have lower educational attainment while hardship is negatively related to satisfaction.

Table 3.4 presents the coefficients from models of partner's affection regressed on parent-child affection, personality and other key background factors for relationship quality. In all three models, parental affection in adolescence is significantly and

positively related to reported partner affection in young adulthood. With each one point increase in the average parental affection score, the average partner affection in the relationship between young adult partners increases by 0.23 of a point. There is only modest attenuation of this relationship when personality is included in Model 2 (the coefficient reduces to 0.19). Neuroticism is negatively related to reported partner affection while openness is positively related to it. Neuroticism again, however, appears to be the more important personality trait. With each one point increase in neuroticism, the average partner affection in the relationship between young adult partners decreases by 0.06 of a point. The relationship between openness with reported partner affection is much weaker. This relationship between parental affection and romantic partner affections holds when key demographic and background factors are included as controls in Model 3. Some of this relationship is accounted for by these confounders, as the strength of the relationship reduces another 0.04 of a point from 0.19 to 0.15. Overall, these estimated associations are quite small, especially compared to some variables, which operate as expected.

Males are more likely to report that their partner is affectionate than females. Blacks report lower levels of partner affection, as compared to whites, while growing up with a single mother is related to lower levels of partner affection, as compared to growing up in a two parent biological family. Educational attainment is also related to partner affection: the attainment of a college degree by parents and respondents were both related to higher levels of partner affection. Hardship and previous cohabitations are negatively related to partner affection. Somewhat surprisingly, cohabitation is actually related to higher levels of partner affection, compared to marriage.

### ***Parental Relationship Socialization Results***

Table 3.5 presents the odds ratios from models of happiness regressed on parent's happiness, personality and other key background factors for relationship quality. All three models indicate that a respondent whose parent reported being happy in his or her romantic relationship has a greater likelihood of being happy in his or her romantic relationship during young adulthood. The probability of being happy in the relationship between young adult partners increases by 11 percent for individuals whose parent reported being happy during their adolescence. Personality does not appear to explain this relationship, for the increase in the probability of being happy in the romantic relationships remains essentially the same (10%) for individuals whose parent reported being happy during their adolescence. Neuroticism is the only significant personality factor, and it is negatively related to reported relationship happiness. The relationship between neuroticism and happiness is very strong; a one unit increase in neuroticism is associated with a 14 percent decline in reported happiness. The relationship between parent happiness and reported happiness in romantic relationships also holds when key demographic and background factors are added as controls.

The most notable effects in the controls are found with regard to race, SES, and relationship type. Blacks have a much lower likelihood of happiness, as compared to whites, while dating and cohabiting individuals have a much lower likelihood of happiness, as compared to married individuals. Finally, educational attainment is positively associated with happiness with hardship is negatively related to happiness.

Table 3.6 presents the coefficients from models of satisfaction with resolution of disagreements regressed on parent's level of fighting, personality and other key

background factors for relationship quality. The results do not support previous literature that socialization is related to romantic relationship quality in adulthood. In the bivariate model, parent's report of fighting in adolescence is related to satisfaction with resolution of disagreements in young adulthood, but this relationship is marginally significant when personality is added to the model. In addition, this relationship becomes insignificant when they key demographic and background factors are added as controls. The results, do, though support previous literature that personality is an important factor in understanding romantic relationship quality, along this negative context. Neuroticism is negatively related to reported satisfaction with resolution of disagreements while extraversion is positively related to reported satisfaction with resolution of disagreements, with neuroticism the more important factor, consistent with prior results.

In addition, the results from the other control variable are consistent with previous literature. Blacks report lower levels of satisfaction with resolution of disagreements, as compared to whites, while cohabiting individuals report lower levels of satisfaction with resolution of disagreements, as compared to married individuals. Finally, hardship is negatively related to satisfaction with resolution of disagreements.

Table 3.7a, b, and c present the coefficients from the models of future relationship orientation regressed on parent's discussion of separation, personality and other key background factors for relationship quality. A chow test indicated that the processes I am modeling between parental discussion of separation, personality, and control variables with future relationship orientation differed significantly by relationship type, so I ran separate analyses for dating, cohabiting, and married individuals. A parent's discussion of separation is not significantly related to cohabiting or dating individuals' future

relationship orientation, but it is related to future relationship orientation for married individuals. For married individuals, in all three models in Table 3.7a a parent's discussion of separation in a romantic relationship during adolescence is significantly related to a married respondent's future romantic relationship orientation. For individuals with parents who have discussed separating, their reported future relationship orientation toward the romantic relationship decreases by 0.27 of a point. This relationship does not change when personality is included in Model 2. Some of the relationship, however, is accounted for by control variables because the strength of the coefficient decreases from 0.26 to 0.19. Additional analyses not shown suggest that a respondent's SES (college attainment and report of hardship) seems to be the main factor responsible. In addition, neuroticism is negatively related to future relationship orientation for married, cohabiting, and dating individuals.

In addition, the results from the control variable are mostly consistent with previous literature. Interesting findings are that cohabiting and dating males report lower future relationship orientation than females. And, members of the first generation who are dating report a higher future relationship orientation than members of the third generation who are dating.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

### *Role of Socialization and Personality*

This study demonstrates that both the family of origin and personality are important factors in understanding romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. These results indicate that it is important to account for both factors when trying to assess romantic relationship quality. An individual's experiences in adolescence, along with

their stable personality traits, influence their romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. A common criticism of research that focuses upon socialization is that the work does not account for factors that may mediate socialization's impact. By accounting for personality, this study is better able to assess the impact of the family of origin on romantic relationships in young adulthood. These results suggest that there is a relationship between the family of origin and romantic relationship quality in young adulthood, and that this relationship is not operating only through shared personality traits. Other studies have also demonstrated the importance of both factors (Bryant and Conger 2002; Donnellan, Larson-Rife, and Conger 2005), but unlike those studies, this study used data that was both nationally-representative and longitudinal.

This study also demonstrates that the relationship between the family of origin and romantic relationship quality in young adulthood is multi-faceted. Both parent-child interactions and parental romantic relationships appear to influence romantic relationship quality. Individuals are not only influenced by their direct interactions with parents, but they also appear to be influenced by a parent's romantic interactions. In addition, this study examined multiple aspects of socialization and romantic relationship quality, which allows us to have a broader and better understanding of the contexts in which the family of origin may matter on romantic relationship quality. Communication and affection with parents in adolescence are related to satisfaction with communication and levels of affection in romantic relationships in young adulthood, while a parent's report of relationship happiness are related to an individual's happiness in his or her relationship. For married individuals, a parent's discussion of his or her separation is related to adult children's view of the longevity of their marriage. The one aspect in which the family of

origin did not appear to influence current romantic relationship quality was with regard to disagreements. The level of fighting reported by a parent was not significantly related to the adult child's reported satisfaction with disagreements in romantic relationships when controlling for other factors.

Future work can build upon this study by examining the link between socialization and romantic relationship quality more deeply. While this study was able to use longitudinal data, the data for the socialization measures come from one time point. Having repeated socialization observations during childhood and adolescence can better help our understanding of the role that the family of origin has upon romantic relationship quality, as it will give us a richer and more detailed understanding of the family of origin environment. In addition, having a greater number of socialization measures from adolescence would allow us to understand in greater detail the contexts in which socialization matter.

These results suggest that socialization impacts multiple aspects of romantic relationship quality, but it is important to note that socialization may not be influential in all aspects of an individual's romantic relationship quality. Future studies can build upon this work by examining the role that the family of origin has on other aspects of romantic relationship quality. Furthermore, much of the previous literature on socialization with regard to relationship quality has often focused on "negative" aspects, such as divorce (Amato 1996; Amato and Booth 2001; Cui, Fincham, and Pasley 2008; Herzog and Cooney 2002; Sanders, Halford, and Behrens 1999; Stocker and Richmond 2007; Yu and Adler-Baeder 2007). These results suggest that socialization can be both positive and negative, which is an important distinction. Strengthening relationships between parents



and children could lead to strengthened romantic relationships for those children when they transition to adulthood.

It is also important to note that this study is focused upon a relatively young sample; it may not be the case that socialization impacts romantic relationships to the same extent at older ages. Dinero et al. (2008) found that both the family of origin and subsequent romantic relationships affect romantic relationship quality, but as romantic relationships persist, the direct influences of the family of origin decreases. This indicates that the family of origin may be of prime significance for the relationships that an individual forms early in life. Future studies should examine whether or not the link between socialization and romantic relationship quality persists among older individuals.

This study not only adds to the socialization literature, but it also adds to the literature on the role that personality plays in romantic relationship quality. Similar to other works, this study found that neuroticism appears to be most closely connected to relationship quality. While the other Big 5 personality dimensions did not appear to be as significant with regard to romantic relationship quality, it is important to note that the other personality factors were significantly related to some aspects of romantic relationship quality. Like Donnellan, Conger, and Bryant (2004), I would advocate for using all 5 measures of personality, as it provides an even broader understanding of what factors matter with regard to romantic relationship quality.

#### *Role of Race, Economic Hardship, and Relationship Type*

While this study's main interest was in better understanding the role that socialization and personality play on the development of young adult romantic relationships, the results from the controls also contribute to our understanding of the role

that race, economic hardship, and relationship type have on romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. This study utilizes very recent data so it can inform us on the importance of race, socioeconomic status, and relationship type is supported with regard to differences in romantic relationship quality found in previous research. Similar to other works, this study found that Blacks report lower levels of relationship quality than Whites do (Broman 2005; Broman 1993; Dillaway and Broman 2001). The differences in reported quality may be due to different behaviors within relationships between Blacks and whites; Broman (2005) found that Blacks and whites experience differing levels of positive and negative behaviors (i.e. spouse has affairs, wastes money, hits or pushes), and these factors explain the association between race and quality.

In addition, this study also supports previous findings in noting that financial hardship is negatively related to romantic relationship quality (e.g. Conger et al. 1990). Many studies have found a relationship between financial hardship and conflict (Benson, Fox, DeMaris, and Van Wyk 2003; Fox, Benson, DeMaris, and Van Wyk, 2002; Hardie and Lucas 2010), and financial hardship and relationship divorce or dissolution (Burstein 2007; Hoffman and Duncan 1995; Kalmijn, Loeve, & Manting 2007; Lewin 2005; South 2001), but results have been very mixed with regard to positive aspects of quality (e.g. satisfaction, affection, love) (White and Rogers 2000). These results suggest that financial hardship is important for all aspects of romantic relationship quality, including positive ones. Economic hardship may increase conflict and reduce intimacy between romantic partners, which in turn may influence perceptions of the quality within this romantic relationship.

Finally, this study also increases our understanding of how romantic relationship quality differs by relationship type. This study found that cohabitators report lower levels of satisfaction, happiness, and future relationship orientation than married individuals do, which supports previous findings that cohabitators report lower levels of romantic quality than married individuals do (Brown and Booth 1996). Somewhat surprisingly, however, this study found that cohabitators report higher levels of partner affection than married individuals do. This finding suggests that cohabitation is not always a more “negative” relationship state than marriage. In addition, this finding indicates the importance of examining multiple aspects of romantic relationship quality, as not all aspects of romantic relationship quality have the same associations with factors theorized to have an association with quality. Furthermore, this study also includes dating individuals. Most studies on romantic relationship quality have often focused upon marriage, or a comparison between marriage and cohabitation. This focus limits our understanding of young romantic relationships, as not all individuals are married and cohabiting in young adulthood. The results from this study suggest that dating is negatively related to satisfaction and happiness, compared to marriage. It seems, therefore, that dating may be more similar to cohabitation in terms of romantic relationship quality in young adulthood.

### *Concluding Remarks*

In sum, personality did not account for the effects of socialization much at all, so the results from this study suggest that socialization and personality traits tend to operate independently of one another. This finding is an important, and surprising, one, since both genetics and the environment shapes an individual’s personality traits. It seemed, likely, therefore, that socialization may operate through personality. These results,

however, do not support this assertion. Rather, the findings suggest that socialization operates independently of personality, and that both factors should be accounted for when trying to understand romantic relationship quality in young adulthood.

While the effects of socialization are rather small, I argue that their effects are still important and significant. One explanation for why the effect sizes are small is that relationships are often influenced by multiple factors, and large effects for single predictors are very unlikely (Ahadi and Diener 1989). Furthermore, socialization's small effects have been argued to be theoretically important in previous works on romantic relationship quality (Donnellan, Larsen-Rife, and Conger 2005), and the total effect of small effects over time can often be impressive (Abelson 1985). In addition, I believe that the effect sizes found in this study represent a lower bound for estimated associations between socialization and romantic relationship quality in young adult. The measures for socialization were measured thirteen years before the measures for romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. I believe it is noteworthy that I even find significant relationships between socialization and romantic relationship quality, with such a long gap in between the family of origin experiences and young adult romantic relationships. It is highly likely that socialization may have a stronger impact on romantic relationships that are formed in closer proximity to the socialization experiences.

Finally, this study also makes important contributions in noting that structural and cultural factors are important factors in understanding romantic relationship quality. In fact, these results suggest that these factors are even more important than inter-personal ones. Socialization and personality traits definitely do not explain all differences in romantic relationship quality, but I do believe that these results indicate that both family

of origin experiences and personality traits should be included in any comprehensive examination of romantic relationship quality in young adulthood.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **AN EXPLORATION OF ADOLESCENT ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS AND THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH YOUNG ADULT ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP QUALITY**

Early romantic relationships are a key developmental task during adolescence (Collins 2003), as they are believed to play a role both in the development of self and the ability to have intimate relationships (Feiring 1996). Early life relationships are also significant for functioning and psychosocial development, with some indication of negative effects. Collins (2003) notes that previous studies show adolescents in romantic relationships report experiencing more interpersonal conflict and more extreme mood swings than adolescents not in relationships. Joyner and Udry (2000) further found that adolescents who participated in a romantic relationship in the past year exhibited more depressive symptoms than those adolescents who did not participate. Furthermore, by late adolescence self-perceived competence in romantic relationships has been discovered to be a reliable component of general competence for individuals (Collins 2003). Romantic relationships in adolescence also appear to influence the type and timing of relationship formation in adulthood, as adolescents who participate in romantic relationships are more likely to cohabit or marry in early adulthood (Raley, Crissey, and Muller 2007).

While research demonstrates the importance of adolescent romantic relationships on later outcomes, aspects of adolescent relationships have often been overlooked in studies, including the content and quality of the relationships. Content refers to the actual

activities in which partners engage (i.e. how they spend time, what they do together) while quality refers to levels of affect and harmony partners experience within the relationships (i.e. intimacy, affection, nurturance) (Collins 2003). The content and quality of adolescent relationships might explain the mixed positive and negative influences of relationships for adolescent outcomes. Social and romantic events, such as spending time with one's partner in a group and holding hands, are more common than sexual events in adolescent relationships (O'Sullivan et al. 2007). Little is known, however, about the impact that the content of adolescent romantic relationships has upon future outcomes.

Life Course Theory illustrates how human development is shaped by both an individual's environment and history (Elder 1998). This theory suggests that adolescent romantic relationship history will shape the nature of later, more permanent romantic relationships. It seems highly likely that adolescent romantic relationships directly influence later romantic relationships and the quality of those relationships. Because most adolescents will experience an exclusive heterosexual relationship by late adolescence (Carver, Joyner, and Udry 2003), it is vital to better understand the nature of adolescent romantic relationships and their important consequences on relationships and functioning in adulthood.

This study seeks to further explore the role that an individual's romantic relationship history plays in the development of romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. In particular, this study first seeks to better understand adolescent romantic relationships by classifying individuals into an adolescent romantic relationship type. Then it explores the association between an adolescent's romantic relationship type and future romantic relationship development, in terms of romantic relationship quality. To

address these issues, a data set is needed that is longitudinal with data collected in adolescence and into adulthood to provide prospective data, rather than retrospective data, with regard to adolescent romantic relationships. Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) make it possible to first identify adolescents' romantic relationship type and then to explore whether or not an adolescent's romantic relationship type is related to romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. Add Health is a nationally-representative study of more than 20,000 adolescents in grades seven through twelve in the United States in 1995 with the fourth wave of data collected in 2008 when respondents were young adults. During the first wave of data collection, respondents who were engaged in an adolescent romantic relationship were asked to report on the content (i.e. social events, romantic events, and sexual events) of that relationship. These measures allow for a broader and deeper understanding of the romantic relationships that are formed in adolescence, as it will allow me to identify adolescents' romantic relationship type. In addition, in the fourth wave Add Health has extensive measures on romantic relationship quality in young adulthood, which allows me to assess how adolescents' romantic relationship type is related to current relationship quality. Add Health's national representativeness, large sample size, and longitudinal design make it an ideal study for exploring an individual's romantic relationship history.

This chapter will contribute to a greater understanding of romantic relationships within the United States. First, it will advance our knowledge of adolescents' romantic relationship type. Secondly, it will help broaden our understanding of the factors that influence the relationship quality of young adults, as it will advance knowledge on the



role that adolescents' romantic relationship type plays in the development of more permanent adult relationships. This study uses data from Add Health to both examine an adolescent's romantic relationship type and explore whether an adolescent's romantic relationship type influences subsequent romantic relationship quality.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Theoretical Framework: Life Course Theory**

Life Course Theory (Elder 1998) can serve as an overarching framework to understand the influence of romantic relationships in adolescence on the quality of relationships formed in young adulthood. In particular, the theory advances the concept of life long development and aging, which suggests that romantic relationships in adolescence will influence the development of later romantic relationships. Previous research supports this assertion. Research from Germany suggests that the quality of adolescent relationships is related to commitment in young adult relationships (Collins 2003); and research from the United States suggests that participation in adolescent romantic relationship is related to the formation of romantic unions in adulthood (Raley, Crissey, and Muller 2007).

Research on young adult American relationships lends support to the notion that earlier romantic relationships matter with regard to later romantic relationship functioning. Dinero et al. (2008) discovered that attachment styles are derived from social experiences throughout an individual's life course. In particular, they found that romantic interactions which were high in warmth and low in hostility at age 25 predicted greater attachment security at age 27. Individuals who are involved in relationships characterized by sensitive, responsive, and caring behaviors are theorized to develop a more secure

attachment style (Dinero et al. 2008). A more secure attachment style, therefore, seems to be indicative of higher quality romantic relationships and interactions. While these findings demonstrate that romantic relationships in adulthood play an important role in subsequent romantic relationships, it seems reasonable to expect that the romantic relationships formed in adolescence will also influence the development of future romantic relationships.

### **Adolescent Relationships**

In early adolescence, interest in opposite-sex friends increases, and opposite-sex friends become more likely partners for both friendship and interaction (Blyth and Foster-Clark 1987; Buhrmester and Furman 1987; Feiring and Lewis 1991). This interaction can lead to relationships beyond friendship. Opposite-sex romantic and sexual relationships also become more prevalent in adolescence (Carver, Joyner, and Udry 2003). These relationships are not always transitory, as the median duration for adolescent romantic relationship is approximately 14 months (Carver, Joyner, and Udry 2003). While adolescents engage in both romantic and sexual relationships, substantially more research has focused upon the sexual behaviors and relationships of adolescents as compared to the romantic behaviors and relationships (Carver, Joyner, and Udry 2003). Many relationships in adolescence do not include any type of sexual behavior so this focus on the sexual context limits the knowledge and understanding researchers have about adolescent relationships and the role these relationships play in future outcomes and development.

Collins (2003) notes that there are five features that are present in all close relationships: involvement, partner selection, content, quality, and cognitive and

emotional processes. Research on adolescent romantic relationships has typically focused on involvement, by examining factors such as whether adolescents date, the age at which dating begins, and the duration of relationships. A focus on involvement tells researchers very little about what goes on in relationships, which limits the ability to understand the developmental significance of romantic relationships (Collins 2003). The content and quality of relationships may be particularly crucial for understanding how romantic relationships play a role in development. In particular, variations in content and quality in adolescent romantic relationships may be able to explain differences in the development of romantic relationships in adulthood. Research from Germany does suggest that the quality of adolescent relationships is related to commitment in relationships in young adulthood (Collins 2003). This suggests that relationship quality differences in adolescence could help explain later differences in relationship quality in adulthood.

It is important to study and understand how adolescent romantic relationships may contribute to romantic relationship quality in young adulthood because research has consistently demonstrated that relationship quality has important consequences on both romantic partners and children. Research has shown that low relationship quality between romantic partners leads to negative consequences for romantic partners and children (Harold and Conger 1997; House, Landis, and Umberson 1988; Leonard and Roberts 1998; Noller and Freeney 1998; Simon and Marcussen 1999) while romantic relationships marked by happiness and stability have a positive impact on adults' (Dush et al. 2008; Proulx, Helms, and Buehler 2007; Wickrama and Elder 1997) and children's (Leidy et al. 2009) well-being. Knowing the importance of adolescent relationships may alter the way parents and other adults treat adolescent relationships. For example, parents

may alter the way they monitor and communicate with adolescents regarding early romantic relationships if they understand the importance that these relationships can have on their subsequent choices and context of romantic relationships.

### **Differences in Adolescent Relationships by Age, Race, and Gender**

Research has found that the nature of adolescent romantic relationships may vary by age, gender, and race. On average, older adolescents are more likely to report a romantic relationship than younger adolescents (Carver, Udry, and Joyner 2003; Shulman and Scharf 2000). In addition, older adolescents engage in more stable, intimate, committed, connected, sexual, and abusive romantic relationships than younger adolescents (Carver, Udry, and Joyner 2003). Adolescents' reports of verbal expressions of love and thinking of themselves as being a "couple," however, are similar for both younger and older adolescents (Carver, Joyner, and Udry 2003). In terms of gender, girls 15 and older are more likely to engage in a romantic relationship than boys of the same age range while the reverse is true for younger ages: boys are slightly more likely to engage in relationships than girls under the age of 15 (Carver, Udry, and Joyner 2003). O'Sullivan et al. (2007) found that males' and females' reports of relationship events were similar, suggesting few sex differences in what typically happens within adolescent romantic relationships.

Race differences indicate that Blacks, whites, Hispanics, and Native Americans were all equally likely to report participation in a romantic relationship while Asian-Americans were significantly less likely than all other racial groups to report an adolescent romantic relationship (Carver, Udry, and Joyner 2003). While Blacks and whites engage in romantic relationships at similar levels, there are differences with regard

to duration and content. Blacks' relationships are, on average, of a shorter duration than whites, and Blacks are less likely to report acts of intimacy and commitment than whites (Carver, Udry, and Joyner 2003). Blacks are also more likely than whites to engage in sexual intercourse (Carver, Udry, and Joyner 2003; O'Sullivan et al. 2007) while Asian-Americans and Hispanics are less likely than whites to engage in sexual intercourse (O'Sullivan et al. 2007). Finally, while there were variations in the proportion of individuals who reported engaging in specific social and romantic events by race, social and romantic events were more common than sexual events and typically these events occurred before any sexual event in an adolescent romantic relationship for all races (O'Sullivan et al. 2007). Due to the potential for differences within adolescent romantic relationships by age, gender, and race, it is important to account for these demographic characteristics when examining how adolescent romantic relationships are related to adult romantic relationships.

### **Purpose of study**

This study addresses the notion that adolescent romantic relationships matter for subsequent relationships into adulthood. In the pursuit of this goal, this study has two research aims. First, it seeks to better to understand adolescent romantic relationship types. To do so, I generate and describe latent classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type. The use of latent class analysis enables inductive investigation into the measurement of an adolescent's romantic relationship type. Estimates of the proportion of adolescents in various relationship classes enable me to ascertain the most common adolescent romantic relationship type. After generating latent classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type, I then examine variations in these latent classes by age,

race/ethnicity, and gender, since previous research indicates that romantic relationships may vary by these characteristics (Carver, Udry, and Joyner 2003; O'Sullivan et al. 2007).

The second research aim is to examine associations between adolescent romantic relationships and adult romantic relationship quality. Once I map adolescents' romantic relationship type, I then examine the association between the classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type and romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. In particular, I examine the role that an adolescent's romantic relationship type has on four aspects of romantic relationship quality in young adulthood: satisfaction, partner affection, contentment, and sexual satisfaction. I then examine the association between an adolescent's romantic relationship type and a general indicator of these four aspects of relationship quality. Examining specific aspects of quality allows me to understand factors associated with different dimensions of romantic relationship quality while examining an overall indicator of quality allows me to better understand the factors associated with quality in general. In this second aim, I also control for factors known to be associated with relationship quality, such as financial hardship, educational attainment, and romantic relationship type. Because the relationship between romantic relationship quality and adolescent romantic relationship type may vary by age, I also examined whether there were differences in the association between adolescent romantic relationship type and relationship quality for younger and older individuals.

## **METHODS**

### **Data**

Data come from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), which is an on-going nationally-representative sample of individuals who were

in 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade in 1995. The last wave of data, the fourth wave, was collected in 2008 when individuals ranged in age from 24 to 32. Add Health used a cluster sample design that was both school-based and multi-stage. The study began in Wave I, in 1995, with an in-school questionnaire that was administered to a nationally representative sample of seventh through twelfth graders. The in-school questionnaire was completed by more than 90,000 adolescents. Add Health then used school rosters to randomly select 200 students from each school, as well as a number of oversamples (e.g. race, ethnicity, disability status) to participate in in-home interviews. Wave I's total sample size for in-home interviews is 20,745 adolescents. The sample size for Wave IV is 15,701 individuals. Wave IV's response rate equals 80.3% of all eligible Wave I respondents.

The fact that this sample is longitudinal and nationally-representative, with measures on the content of adolescent romantic relationships and extensive measures on romantic relationship quality in young adulthood, make it an ideal dataset for exploring the nature of adolescent romantic relationships and the role that adolescent romantic relationships have upon relationship quality in young adulthood. For additional information on the Add Health study, see Harris et al. (2009) for a more detailed description.

This study uses data from the Wave I and Wave IV surveys (N=15,701). The samples for this analysis differ, depending upon the research question. For the first stage of the analysis (research aim 1), which explores adolescents' romantic relationship type, the analysis is limited to individuals who were in a heterosexual adolescent romantic relationship and answered all of the questions on the nature of that romantic relationship at Wave I. 12,831 respondents are classified as being in a heterosexual romantic

relationship in the previous 18 months. 448 respondents were missing information on all of the content measures (i.e. the social, romantic, and sexual activities that occurred within the relationship). The sample size for the latent class analysis of adolescents' romantic relationship type, therefore, is 12,383. For the second stage of the analysis (research aim 2), which examines romantic relationship quality in young adulthood, only those individuals who reported on an adolescent romantic relationship, were in a current adult heterosexual relationship at Wave IV, have valid weights, and have valid relationship data from Wave IV are included in the analysis. 5,557 respondents both participated in an adolescent romantic relationship and were currently in an adult romantic relationship; however, of these respondents 85 are missing data on at least one of the key indicators and 288 have missing weights. The sample size for this analysis is 5,183.

## **Measures**

### ***Adolescents' Romantic Relationship Type***

At Wave I, respondents were asked to report on up to three romantic relationships that occurred in the past 18 months. Sixteen indicator variables that measure the content of adolescent romantic relationships were used to construct the latent classes. The first indicator is the number of relationships (i.e. one, two, or three). The remaining fifteen indicators relate to social, romantic, or sexual events that occurred within each relationship. Respondents were asked to report whether the following social, romantic, or sexual event occurred in each adolescent romantic relationship:

1. Went Out in Groups (Social Event): Respondents indicated whether they went out with their romantic partners in groups.



2. Met Parents (Social Event): Respondents indicated whether they met their romantic partners' parents.
3. Went Out Alone (Social Event): Respondents indicated whether they went out with their romantic partner alone
4. Saw Less of Friends (Social Event): Respondents indicated whether or not they saw less of their friends.
5. Held Hands (Romantic Event): Respondents indicated whether they held hands with their romantic partner.
6. Gave Partner Gift (Romantic Event): Respondents indicated whether or not they gave their partner a gift.
7. Partner Gave Gift (Romantic Event): Respondents indicated whether or not their partner gave them a gift.
8. Said "I love you" (Romantic Event): Respondents indicated whether they told their partner I loved him or her.
9. Partner said "I love you" (Romantic Event): Respondents indicated whether their partner told me that he or she loved me
10. Kissed (Romantic Event): Respondents indicated whether they kissed their partner.
11. Touched Under Clothes (Sexual Event): Respondents indicated whether they touched each other under their clothing or with no clothes on.
12. Had Sex (Sexual Event): Respondents indicated whether they had sexual intercourse.

13. Genital Touching (Sexual Event): Respondents indicated whether they touched each other's genitals (private parts).
14. Talked About Birth Control/STDs (Sexual Event): Respondents indicated whether or not they talked about birth control or STDs with their partners.
15. Got Pregnant (Sexual Event): Respondents indicated whether or not a pregnancy occurred in the relationship with the partner.

A three category measure was created, which indicated whether each event happened in every relationship reported by the respondent, in some relationships reported by the respondent, or in no relationships reported by the respondent.

#### *Age, Race/Ethnicity, and Gender*

For age, I classify respondents as either young (15 and under) or old (16 and over). For race/ethnicity, I classify respondents into 5 racial/ethnic groups. Respondents could be classified as: Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, Asian, Latino, and Other (including Native American). For gender, I classify respondents as either male or female.

#### ***Romantic Relationship Quality in Young Adulthood***

Table 4.1 provides means for all measures in the analysis of romantic relationship quality in young adulthood by relationship type. For all measures, a higher value indicates a higher level of each measure (i.e. on a 5-point scale of satisfaction, a 1 would indicate low levels of satisfaction while a 5 would indicate high levels of satisfaction). Measures whose original question wording led to scales where lower numbers indicated higher levels of the measure were reverse coded.

#### *Dependent Variables: Relationship Quality in Young Adulthood*

Five measures of relationship quality have been constructed from the Wave IV questionnaire and serve as the fundamental dependent variables: satisfaction, partner's affection, contentment, satisfaction with sex, and overall quality. Satisfaction is measured from two questions: respondents were asked on a 5-point scale to rate their satisfaction with the way in which the respondent and partner handle problems and disagreements and their satisfaction with the way in which the respondent and partner handle family finances. A measure for overall satisfaction was created, which is the mean of the responses to the two items<sup>18</sup>. Married individuals report higher levels of satisfaction than cohabiting individuals do.

Partner's affection is also measured from two questions: respondents were asked on a 5-point scale to rate their agreement with the following two statements: my partner listens to me when I need someone to talk to and my partner expresses love and affection to me. A measure for overall partner affection was created, which is the mean of the responses to the two items<sup>19</sup>. Reported partner's affection does not vary by relationship type.

Contentment is measured from three questions on the Wave IV questionnaire: respondents were asked to report how much they enjoy doing ordinary, day-to-day things together, how much they love their partner, and how happy they are in their relationship with their partner. A measure of overall contentment was created, which is the mean of the response to the three items. From this overall measure, a dichotomous indicator for

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<sup>18</sup> I also examined a measure that took the simple sum of the two scales for satisfaction. Results were consistent in all models.

<sup>19</sup> I also examined a measure that took the simple sum of the two scales for partner's affection and a dichotomous measure of partner affection. Results were consistent in all models.

overall contentment was created, with a 4 = 1 and everything below 4 = 0. Married individuals report higher levels of contentment than dating and cohabiting individuals do.

Satisfaction with sex life is measured by one question on the Wave IV questionnaire. Respondents were asked to report their satisfaction with their sex life on a 5-point scale. Reported satisfaction with sex does not vary by relationship type.

The indicator of overall quality is measured by taking the mean response of all the items that comprised each aspect of romantic relationship quality<sup>20</sup>. Therefore, this measure is comprised of a respondent's satisfaction, partner affection, contentment, and satisfaction with sex life. Married individuals report higher levels of overall quality than dating individuals do.

*Main Explanatory Variable of Interest: Classes of Adolescents' Romantic Relationship Type*

The classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type will be generated in the latent class analysis in the first aim of this study and discussed in the results section. These classes represent the fundamental independent variable of interest in examining relationship quality in young adulthood.

*Control Variables:*

In order to fully understand factors that influence romantic relationship quality in young adulthood, I control for several factors that are also likely to shape responses to relationship quality questions in young adulthood. First, I control for the respondent's relationship type. Respondents were asked to report on the partners with whom they had a romantic or sexual relationships. For each listed partner, respondents were asked to report on the type of the relationship (i.e. married, cohabiting, dating) and whether or not

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<sup>20</sup> I also examined a measure that took the simple sum of the scales for overall quality. Results were consistent in all models.

the relationship was current. In the rare instance when individuals listed more than one “current” relationship, I selected the relationship that corresponded to the first listed partner. In this sample, 73% of respondents are married, 19% are cohabiting, and 7% are dating.

In addition, I control for basic demographic factors (immigrant generation, race/ethnicity, sex, and age) that are correlated with romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. The measure for immigrant generation was created from answers about nativity from the Wave I questionnaire and cross-checked with answers about nativity in the in-school, parent questionnaire, and Wave II questionnaire (see Harris 1999). Respondents who were not born in the United States and whose parents were foreign born were classified as Generation 1. Respondents who were born in the United States and who had at least one foreign born parent were classified as Generation 2. Finally, respondents who were born in the United States and whose parents were born in the United States were classified as Generation 3. I also control for race and gender, which are measured in the same manner as described in the measures for the Adolescent Romantic Relationship Types.

In addition, I control for a respondent’s educational attainment, financial hardship, and previous relationship history. A respondent’s educational attainment was measured by a dummy variable created from the Wave IV questionnaire, which indicated whether a respondent had attained a college degree or higher = 1 or whether the respondent had attained less than a college degree = 0. Hardship is assessed by an index of six items that indicates financial hardship: whether in the past year the respondent was without phone service, couldn’t pay the full rent or mortgage, was evicted, didn’t pay a

full utility bill, had utilities shut off, or worried that food would run out, ranging from 0 = none of these had happened to 6 = all of these had happened. I chose to use hardship, rather than income, to assess the relationship between socioeconomic status and relationship quality because previous work suggests that quality is more responsive to subjective economic measures, such as perceived hardship, than objective measures, such as income (White and Rogers 2000). I assessed whether or not a respondent had previously cohabited through a dummy variable constructed from the Wave IV questionnaire. For those who are currently cohabiting, a respondent was classified as having previously cohabited if they listed more than one cohabitation in their list of total relationships. For those who are currently married and dating, a respondent was classified as previously cohabited if they listed at least one cohabitation in their list of total relationships. Similarly, I assessed whether or not a respondent had previously married through a dummy variable constructed from the Wave IV questionnaire. For those who are currently married, a respondent was classified as having previously married if they listed more than one marriage in their list of relationships. For those who are currently cohabiting and dating, a respondent was classified as previously married if they listed at least one marriage in their list of total relationships.

Finally, I also control for the family of origin's family structure and the educational attainment of a respondent's parents since family background is often associated with romantic relationship quality in adulthood. It also seems reasonable to expect that family structure and family background may also influence the type of romantic relationships formed in adolescence. The respondent's family structure during adolescence is measured by 5 dummy variables, which were constructed from the Wave I

questionnaire. Respondents can be classified as living with: 2 biological or adoptive parents, one biological and one step-parent, single mother, single father, and two step-parents or other family (respondents in this category could be living with two step-parents, foster parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings or other adults who act as parent figures). A respondent's parents' educational attainment was measured by a dummy variable created from the Wave I questionnaire, which indicated whether either parent had attained a college degree or higher =1 or whether the respondents' parents had attained less than a college degree = 0.

### **Analytic Strategy**

In the first stage of analyses, I conduct a latent class analysis (LCA) to better understand the type of relationships that are formed during adolescence. LCA uses a set of observed categorical variables in order to identify discrete, mutually exclusive latent classes of individuals (Lanza et al. 2007). The latent classes were determined using the previously identified sixteen indicators of the content within adolescent romantic relationships. To run LCA, I will specify a series of latent class models with two, three, four, and five classes.

Once I select my optimal base model, I estimate two sets of parameters: class membership probabilities ( $\gamma$  (gamma) parameters) and item-response probabilities, which are contingent on class membership ( $\rho$  (rho) parameters). The  $\gamma$  parameters illustrate the distribution of individuals across all latent classes while the  $\rho$  parameters indicate the correspondence between all observed indicators and the latent classes. The values on the  $\rho$  parameters range from 0 to 1, so a value closer to 1 signifies a greater correspondence between that indicator and membership in a particular latent class. Once I

select the optimal base model for the full sample, I will also conduct multiple-group LCA in order to explore potential variations in class membership probability by age, race/ethnicity and gender.

In the second stage of the analysis, I use ordinary least squares regression or logistic regression, depending upon the linear/binary form of the romantic relationship quality measure, to assess the relationship between the classes of romantic relationship type during adolescence and five aspects of romantic relationship quality in young adulthood: satisfaction, partner affection, contentment, satisfaction with sex, and overall quality. I first examine the bivariate relationship between the latent classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type and each romantic relationship quality measure. Next, I examine the relationship between the latent classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type and each romantic quality measure, controlling for demographic and relationship characteristics. In addition, I also examine whether or not there were differences in the association between the latent classes of adolescents' relationship type and relationship quality for younger and older individuals. I tested for differences by running Chow tests. A Chow test is a statistical test that evaluates whether coefficients from a regression model are significantly different from one another across subsamples (in this case, across age group) (Chow 1960). The results of the Chow tests reveal that there were not any significant differences by age so I do not run separate analyses by age.

## **RESULTS**

### ***Adolescents' Romantic Relationship Type***

Table 4.2 presents the likelihood-ratio  $G^2$  statistic, AIC, BIC, and Degrees of Freedom for baseline latent class models of adolescents' romantic relationship type for



the entire sample. Models with one, two, three, four, and five classes are compared. I assessed the models and determined the optimal base model using the following three fit statistics: the likelihood-ratio  $G^2$  statistic, Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC; Akaike 1974), and the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC; Schwarz 1978).

Improved model fit is indicated by a noteworthy decrease in the likelihood-ratio  $G^2$  statistic, AIC, and BIC between a model with  $n$  classes and a model with  $n + 1$  classes. I selected the five-class model as the optimal base model. Table 4.2 demonstrates that there is a noteworthy decrease in all three criteria. I did examine models with higher than five classes, however, I found that I could not get models with six or seven classes to converge. Therefore, I determined that there are five latent classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type among American adolescents involved in relationships. When I selected the optimal base model of five latent classes, I also accounted for the model's interpretability. In particular, the base model needed to meet the following requirements: no class could be trivial in size, each class must have its own meaningful label, and the classes must have distinctive characteristics from one another (Lanza et al. 2007).

Additional information from the latent class analysis allows one to have an understanding of the commonality and characteristics of each class. Table 4.3 displays the  $\gamma$  and  $\rho$  parameters for the five-class model. I labeled the five classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type, for reasons which will be explained when I explore in greater detail the  $\rho$  parameters, the following: *intense*, *affectionate*, *casual*, *multi-intense*, and *multi-varied*. The most common adolescent relationship type is intense, representing approximately 35% of adolescents, followed by affectionate at 20% and casual at 19%.

The two least common types are multi-intense, which comprises 13% of adolescents, followed closely by multi-varied, which comprises 12% of adolescents.

An examination of the  $\rho$  parameters allows us to have a greater understanding of the characteristics of each latent class, which should also demonstrate why the given labels for each class are appropriate. The  $\rho$  parameters displayed in Table 4.3 indicate the probability of each indicator occurring within a given class membership. For example, an examination of the *intense* class reveals that intensive individuals are highly likely to be involved in only one relationship within the past 18 months ( $\rho > 0.90$ ). In addition, they have a high likelihood ( $\rho > 0.80$ ) of the following social, romantic, and sexual events occurring within their relationship: go out in groups, meet parents, go out alone, hold hands, give partner gift, partner gives gift, said I love you, partner said I love you, kiss, touch under clothes, have sex, touch genitals, and talk about STDS.

*Affectionate* individuals are also highly likely to be involved in one relationship ( $\rho > 0.89$ ) and have a high likelihood of social and romantic events occurring with their relationship ( $\rho > 0.80$ ). In particular, they go out in groups, meet parents, go out alone, hold hands, give partner gift, partner gives gift, say I love you, partner says I love you, and kiss. They, however, have a low likelihood of sexual events occurring within the relationship, particularly with regard to having sex and touching genitals ( $\rho < 0.05$ ). They are slightly more likely to touch under clothes, but the likelihood is still low ( $\rho < 0.25$ ). The other class that also has a high likelihood ( $\rho > 0.90$ ) of one relationship within the past 18 months is the *casual* class. Casual individuals, however, appear to be less romantic or social than either the intense or affectionate class, as the

likelihood of the social and romantic events occurring within the relationship ranges from ( $\rho = 0.20$ ) of giving a partner a gift to ( $\rho = 0.74$ ) of kissing. While they are less romantic than the affection class, their likelihood of engaging in sexual events is actually higher than the affectionate class. The likelihood of having sex is still low, but here the ( $\rho = 0.17$ ), while the likelihood of genital touching is ( $\rho = 0.27$ ) and the likelihood of touching under clothes is ( $\rho = 0.36$ ).

The other two classes differ from the first three classes in that individuals who engage in these two types of relationships have a high likelihood of reporting more than one relationship in the previous 18 months. The probability of being involved in one relationship is 0.00 for both groups. The group I classify as *multi-intense* is very similar to the intensive class. The difference, here, is that individuals have a high likelihood of being involved in more than one relationship in the past 18 months ( $\rho = 0.72$  for two relationships and 0.28 for three relationships). The probability that they never engage in the following social, romantic, and sexual events in their relationships is lower than 0.10: go out in groups, meet parents, go out alone, hold hands, give partner gift, partner gives gift, say I love you, partner says I love you, kiss, touch under clothes, and touch genitals. In addition, their likelihood of having sex in none of their relationships is rather low ( $\rho = 0.21$ ). The group that I label as *multi-varied* is classified by greater variability than any other group. Their probability of being in two relationships is 0.61 while their probability of being in three relationships is 0.39. They have a very low probability of social, romantic, and sexual events occurring in none of their relationships, but their probability of social, romantic, and sexual events occurring in only some relationships, as opposed to all relationships, is higher than the multi-intense group.

### *Group Differences*

Next, I explored whether the probability of belonging to each class varied by three grouping variables: age, race/ethnicity, and gender. In order to do this, I constrained item-response probabilities (the  $\rho$  parameters) to be equal across groups, and I examined whether the  $\gamma$  parameters differed by age, race/ethnicity, and gender<sup>21</sup>. Table 4.4 presents the  $\gamma$  parameters across groups, and it demonstrates that the probability of belonging to each class differs greatly by age. Younger individuals (individuals who are 15 and under at Wave I) are far more likely to be classified as affectionate (29%) and casual (29%) while older individuals (individuals who are 16 and older at Wave I) are far more likely to be classified as intensive (42%). There do not seem to be as stark differences with regard to race/ethnicity. Blacks (38%) are more likely to be intensive while Asian-Americans (31%) and individuals classified as “other” (30%) are least likely. Asian-Americans (30%) and Latinos (24%) are more likely to be affectionate compared to Whites (20%) and Blacks (18%). And, with regard to gender, there really do not seem to be differences in the probability of belonging to each class<sup>22</sup>.

### *Young Adult Romantic Relationship Quality*

The first stage of the analysis revealed that there are five classes of adolescents’ romantic relationship type: intense, romantic, casual, multi-intense, and multi-varied. In

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<sup>21</sup> I also tried to examine models in which I allowed the item-response probabilities to be freely estimated across groups (i.e. allow the  $\rho$  parameters to vary). Due to the size of my models, the freely estimated models never converged. A chi square test between the fit statistics for the constrained model and the freely estimated model would have revealed whether or not I should separate my models and conduct separate LCA by age, race/ethnicity, and gender. I did, however, conduct LCA modeling separately by age, race/ethnicity, and gender, and the findings from those separate models support the findings discussed when examining the constrained model.

<sup>22</sup> The analysis of group differences is a purely descriptive analysis, based upon visual examination of the  $\gamma$  parameters.

order to use these baseline classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type as independent variables in the multiple regression analyses in the analysis of romantic relationship quality, I computed a respondent's probability of membership in each of the latent classes using Bayes's theorem (Lanza et al. 2007). I then applied the rule of maximum-probability assignment, which assigns respondents to the class for which they have the highest probability of membership (Nagin 2005). A set of five dichotomous dummy variables, which indicate the five classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type, was used in this second stage of the analysis. The means for the sample and by relationship type at Wave IV are displayed in Table 4.5.

The second stage of the analysis examines whether or not an adolescent's romantic relationship type is related to romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. I use the affectionate class as the reference category in all analyses, as the affectionate class seems to fit the ideal adolescent relationship type, from an adult perspective<sup>23</sup>. Table 4.6 presents the coefficients from the models of relationship satisfaction regressed on the classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type and key background factors for relationship quality. The results suggest that an adolescent's romantic relationship type is associated with romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. Membership in the intensive, casual, multi-intense, and multi-varied classes is negatively related to satisfaction, compared to membership in the affectionate class. Membership in the casual and intense classes is associated with a 0.12 of a point and 0.13 of a point reduction in the satisfaction scale respectively, while membership in the multi-varied class is associated with a 0.13 of a point reduction and membership in the multi-intense class is associated with a 0.23 reduction of a point in satisfaction. The magnitude of these effects is small, as

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<sup>23</sup> I also examined models in which the intensive class was the reference category. Results were consistent.

the satisfaction scale ranges from 1 to 5. The relationship between casual class membership and satisfaction is no longer statistically significant, in the adjusted Model 2, but the relationship is still significant for the other three classes. The relationship between class membership and reported satisfaction slightly weakens for the intense and multi-intense classes, while it actually strengthens slightly for the multi-varied class. In Model 2, membership in the intense class is associated with a 0.11 of a point reduction, membership in the multi-varied class is associated with 0.17 of a point reduction, and membership in the multi-intense class is associated with a 0.19 of a point reduction in reported satisfaction.

Results from the control variable are consistent with previous literature. Blacks and Latinos report lower levels of satisfaction, compared to whites, while dating individuals report lower levels of satisfaction, as compared to married individuals. Finally, hardship is negatively related to satisfaction while college attainment is positively related to reported satisfaction.

Table 4.7 presents the coefficients from models of partner's affection regressed on the classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type and other background factors for relationship quality. Again, the results suggest that an adolescent's romantic relationship type is associated with romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. The bivariate results show that membership in the intensive and multi-intense classes is negatively related to partner affection, compared to membership in the affectionate class. Membership in the intense class is associated with a 0.12 point reduction and membership in the multi-intense class is associated with a 0.14 point reduction in the partner affection scale, which ranges from 1 to 5. The relationship between adolescent

romantic relationship type and reported partner affection is no longer statistically significant, however, when controls are added to the baseline model.

There are also differences in reported levels of partner affection by the control variables, and most results from the controls are consistent with previous literature. Blacks report lower levels of partner affection, compared to whites, while individuals classified as “other race” report higher levels of partner affection than whites. Males report higher levels of partner affection than females. Educational attainment is also related to partner affection: the attainment of a college degree by parents and respondents were both related to higher levels of partner affection, while hardship is negatively related to partner affection. In addition, previously cohabiting and age are negatively related to partner affection.

Table 4.8 presents the odds ratios from the models of contentment regressed on the classes of adolescents’ romantic relationship type and key background factors for relationship quality. The results suggest that membership in the multi-intense class is negatively related to contentment, compared to membership in the affectionate class. Members in the multi-intense class are 30% less likely to report contentment in young adult relationships, compared to members of the affectionate class. This relationship is still statistically significant with the addition of the controls in Model 2, and changes little. None of the other adolescent relationship classes differ significantly from the affectionate one with regard to contentment in young adult relationships.

Among the controls, males report lower levels of contentment than females. Blacks and Latinos report lower levels of contentment, compared to whites. Educational attainment is also related to contentment: the attainment of a college degree by

respondents is related to higher levels of contentment. Hardship is negatively related to contentment. Finally, cohabitation and dating are associated with lower levels of contentment, compared to marriage.

Table 4.9 presents the results for the relationship quality aspect of satisfaction with sex. Bivariate results indicate that membership in the intense, multi-varied and multi-intense classes is negatively related to satisfaction with sex, compared to membership in the affectionate class. This relationship between class membership and sexual satisfaction is no longer statistically significant for the intense membership, once controls are added in Model 2, while the relationship remains unchanged for the multi-varied membership and weakens slightly for the multi-intense membership. In the adjusted model, membership in the multi-varied class is associated with a 0.21 of a point reduction in the reported sexual satisfaction measure, which ranges from 1 to 5, while membership in the multi-intense class is associated with a 0.18 of a point reduction in sexual satisfaction.

Only a few control variables are significantly related to sexual satisfaction. Somewhat surprisingly, attainment of a college degree is associated with lower sexual satisfaction while previously being married is associated with higher sexual satisfaction. Hardship and previously cohabiting are negatively associated with sexual satisfaction. Finally, growing up in an alternative family arrangement is associated with higher sexual satisfaction, compared to growing up in a two biological parent household.

Table 4.10 presents the coefficients from the models of overall quality regressed on the classes of adolescent romantic relationship type and key background factors for relationship quality. Bivariate results suggest that membership in the intense and multi-



intense classes is negatively related to overall quality, compared to membership in the affectionate class. In the adjusted model, only membership in the multi-intense class weakens is significantly associated with a 0.11 point reduction in reported overall quality, a very small effect size for a measure that ranges from 1 to 4.6.

The relationship between the controls and overall quality has been consistent across all quality measures. Blacks report lower levels of quality, compared to whites. Educational attainment is also related to quality: the attainment of a college degree by parents and respondents were both related to higher levels of quality. Hardship and previously cohabiting are both negatively related to overall quality. Finally, dating is associated with lower levels of quality, compared to marriage.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This study had two specific research aims: first to better understand the romantic relationships types formed during adolescence, and secondly, to better understand the association between adolescent romantic relationship type and young adult romantic relationship quality. This study made significant contributions to our understanding of adolescent romantic relationships because it makes an important methodological and theoretical advance in its use of latent class analysis (LCA). LCA provides a more inductive approach to understanding adolescent romantic relationships, and it is an advance over previous studies that have focused solely on reporting percentages of adolescents who report engaging in a specific social, romantic, or sexual activity within their adolescent romantic relationships (Carver, Joyner, and Udry 2002; O'Sullivan et al. 2007). LCA allows us to have a better sense of an adolescent's romantic relationship

type. Beyond informing us on adolescents' romantic relationship type, LCA also allows us to understand how prevalent each type is.

Results suggest that there are five classes of adolescent romantic relationship type: intense, affectionate, casual, multi-intense, and multi-varied. These findings are important because despite interest in adolescent romantic relationships, knowledge of the content and quality of these relationships has been relatively lacking (Collins 2003). These findings suggest that approximately 75% of adolescent who engage in romantic relationships only report one romantic relationship in the past 18 months, which indicates that most adolescents do not engage in many transitory romantic relationships. The most prevalent type of adolescent is an intensive one, which is marked by a high likelihood of social, romantic, and sexual events occurring within the union. But, the next two most prevalent types of adolescents are ones marked by a low likelihood of sexual events occurring within the relationship. This finding is important because a large focus of adolescent relationship research has centered upon sexual relationships (Carver, Joyner, and Udry 2003). These results suggest that this focus is a limited one, as it fails to capture the experiences of all adolescents within their romantic relationships.

There do appear to be variations in an adolescent's romantic relationship type by both age and gender. Younger adolescents are more likely to be non-sexual (i.e. affectionate and casual) while older adolescents are more likely to sexual (i.e. intensive). This result is probably not surprising, as it seems likely that relationships would intensify as individuals age (Carver, Joyner, and Udry 2003). Results do also suggest some racial/ethnic differences. Blacks seem to be the most likely to be sexual, with Asians and those classified as Other Race the least likely, which is consistent with other research

(e.g. O'Sullivan et al 2007). Furthermore, both Asians and Latinos are more likely than Blacks and Whites to be classified as affectionate. While there are variations by race/ethnicity and age, there do not, however, appear to be much in the way of differences by gender. Males and females appear to be relatively similar to one another.

It is important to note that in the generation of classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type, I do not take into account the duration of romantic relationships<sup>24</sup>. It is possible that the affectionate and casual types are individuals whose relationships are of a shorter durations than intensive individuals, and that as relationships lengthen in duration, affectionate and casual individuals transition to the intensive class. Furthermore, I do not examine how factors other than age, race/ethnicity, and gender relate to an adolescent's romantic relationship type. Future work can build upon this study by examining other factors. Potential factors to consider include family background (i.e. family structure, family SES) and religiosity.

The construction of latent classes not only furthered our understanding of adolescent romantic relationships, but it also allowed me to examine if an adolescent's romantic relationship type is associated with romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. Results do suggest that an adolescent's romantic relationship type influences romantic relationship quality in young adulthood, which supports findings from Germany (Collins 2003). In particular, the results indicate that the membership in the affectionate class is the most positive with regard to romantic relationship quality in young adulthood, and that compared to membership in the affectionate class, membership in the two multiple classes were the most negative with regard to romantic relationship quality.

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<sup>24</sup> While the questionnaire did ask respondents to report on the length of their adolescent romantic relationships, approximately 4,000 respondents are missing information on this measure. Due to concerns about the quality of this data, I chose not to include it in the latent class analysis.

While the effects of an adolescent's romantic relationship type are rather small, I argue that their effects are still important and significant. One explanation for why the effect sizes are small is that relationships are often influenced by multiple factors, and large effects for single predictors are very unlikely (Ahadi and Diener 1989). Furthermore, the total effect of small effects over time can often be impressive (Abelson 1985). These findings suggest that a romantic relationship type characterized by multiple adolescent relationships in a short period may be linked with lower romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. It seems, therefore, that stability in adolescent romantic relationships may be important for later romantic relationship development.

It is important to note that the longitudinal data for the adolescent romantic relationships were collected retrospectively at one point in time. To fully be able to understand how adolescent romantic relationships influence young adult romantic relationship quality, a prospective longitudinal design of romantic relationship histories from adolescence may be better to map relationship trajectories. In addition, the data focused solely on the content of the adolescent romantic relationships; there were not positive quality measures, such as levels of satisfaction and happiness with the relationship, only more negative quality measures such as violence and abuse in relationships. Knowing the quality of adolescent romantic relationships would not only broaden our understanding of the nature of adolescent romantic relationships, but it would also help better inform how adolescent romantic relationships may influence the quality of later relationships. Finally, having the same romantic relationship measures collected in adolescence, along with adulthood, would be ideal. This type of data would

allow researchers to much more fully understand the trajectory of an individual's romantic relationships over the life course.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

Social scientists and family researchers have paid, and continue to pay, considerable attention to the study of family relationships. Relationships are important in individuals' lives, as they have been linked to both emotional well-being and physical health (Gottman 1998). In young adulthood, individuals typically transition to new roles, such as romantic partner, spouse, and parent, and form new family relationships of their own. The quality of these newly formed relationships can vary considerably so it is important to understand the factors that influence both romantic and parent-child relationships in young adulthood.

While considerable research has examined factors that influence romantic relationships and parenting in adulthood, gaps in our knowledge still do remain. In particular, much of the research has centered around data that is cross-sectional in nature. Cross-sectional studies provide much insight into factors that are associated with current relationships, but these studies cannot speak to how an individual's life course may influence the relationships they form in young adulthood. Life Course Theory notes that human development is shaped by both an individual's environment and history (Elder 1998), and this theory suggests that to understand relationships in young adulthood, one must account for earlier life experiences. The relationships that are formed in young

adulthood do not form in a vacuum; individuals within those relationships are shaped by experiences both within their family of origin and within early romantic unions.

Individuals take the lessons they learn from earlier relationships into subsequent relationships, building a trajectory that defines their current situation.

In this dissertation, I examine how experiences in adolescence shape relationships in young adulthood. In particular, I explore how three aspects of adolescence (cultural differences in the socialization process of adolescents, captured by immigrant generation; relationships with parents; romantic relationships) influence romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. In addition, I also examine how cultural differences in the socialization process of adolescents, captured by immigrant generation, influences parenting attitudes and language usage with children. These topics are examined using nationally-representative, longitudinal data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). In the first substantive chapter, Chapter 2, I broaden the understanding on romantic relationship quality and parenting in the United States by examining quality and parenting in young adulthood across all immigrant generations and racial/ethnic groups. In Chapter 3, I bridge together two extensive streams of literature by examining the role that both socialization and personality play on romantic relationship quality. And, finally, in Chapter 4, I first examine adolescents' romantic relationship type. Latent class analysis allows me to investigate the classes of American adolescents' romantic relationship type, and I also examine if there are differences in adolescents' romantic relationship type by age, race/ethnicity, and gender. I am then able to assess whether an adolescent's romantic relationship type influences subsequent romantic relationship quality.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Table 5.1 displays a summary of the main findings in this work.

### *Role of Immigrant Generation and Race/Ethnicity*

Results from Chapter 2 suggest that there were few differences in young adult romantic relationship quality by immigrant generation in the United States. This finding is an important one because previous immigrant research on the family has typically focused on family behaviors (i.e. family formation patterns) and family processes (i.e. intergenerational relations) (Glick 2010). Very little was known about generational differences in romantic relationship quality. These results suggest that the context of romantic relationships is similar for individuals who spent their adolescence in the United States, regardless of nativity status, as quality in romantic relationships does not seem to vary by immigrant generation.

Similarly, there do not appear to be differences with regard to parenting views by immigrant generation. These results again suggest that the context of family relationships is similar across generations, as there are no generational differences in reported parental stress or contentment. This finding is significant because it indicates that structural factors, particularly the type of relationship and SES, are more important than cultural factors in the formation of parenting views. There does, however, appear to be generational differences with regard to one parenting behavior: language usage with children at home. These results support assimilation theories in which each successive generation is more assimilated into American culture. Analysis that examined differences among the two largest immigrant ethnic groups also revealed that there are ethnic differences with regard to language usage. Latinos were more likely than Asians to speak



a language other than English at home, suggesting that the assimilation process differs across immigrant ethnic groups in the United States. This distinction reinforces the importance of studying specific ethnic groups to understand how family life operates in the United States. This distinction becomes even more important in light of the increasing diversity of the United States' population.

While there do not appear to be many differences with regard to romantic relationship quality and parenting by immigrant generation, there do appear to be differences with regard to romantic relationship quality by race/ethnicity. Consistent with previous literature (Broman 1993; Dillaway and Broman 2001), this study found that Blacks report lower levels of relationship quality (satisfaction, partner affection, and contentment) than whites. This dissertation went beyond prior research by including Latinos and Asians in its analysis. I found that there are no differences in romantic relationship quality between Asians and whites, and that Latinos only significantly differed from whites with regard to satisfaction. There has been a void in the literature with regard to romantic relationship quality across all racial/ethnic subgroups so this finding helps to better inform how romantic relationships fare for all individuals living in the United States. The findings with regard to Latinos do support previous research, which suggests relationship quality among Mexican Americans is similar to whites' (Phillips and Sweeney 2006).

While this study indicates that there are differences by race/ethnicity with regard to both romantic relationship quality and language usage, questions remain to why these differences exist. The differences in reported quality may be due to different behaviors within relationships across ethnic groups. Broman (2005) found that Blacks and whites

experience differing levels of positive and negative behaviors (i.e. spouse has affairs, wastes money, hits or pushes), and these factors explain the association between race and quality for Blacks and whites. It may be, therefore, that the behaviors and interactions within romantic relationships drive the romantic relationship quality differences between racial and ethnic groups in the United States. In addition, findings from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey offer possible explanations for the differences found in this study with regard to language usage between Latinos and Asians. Second generation Asian young adults are more likely to prefer speaking English only (Zhou and Xiong 2005) than second generation Latino and Caribbean young adults (Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, and Haller 2005). In addition, it appears that there may be differences in proficiency in native languages between Asians and Latinos, as less than 25% of second generation Asians are fluent in their native languages (Zhou and Xiong 2005), so at least part of the differences in language usage is most likely driven by differences in fluency.

#### *Role of Socialization and Personality*

Results from Chapter 3 suggest that both experiences in the family of origin in adolescence and stable personality traits are important factors for understanding romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. In particular, these results suggest that there is a relationship between the family of origin and romantic relationship quality in young adulthood, and that this relationship is not operating only through shared personality traits, which supports findings from studies based on non-representative samples (Bryant and Conger 2002; Donnellan, Larson-Rife, and Conger 2005).

These results also suggest that both the direct aspect of socialization (i.e. interactions with parents) and the indirect aspect of socialization (i.e. modeling of

parents' romantic interactions) are important factors for understanding young adult romantic relationship quality. Furthermore, these results broaden our understanding of the contexts in which socialization matters. Much of the previous literature on socialization with regard to relationship quality has often focused on “negative” aspects, such as divorce (Amato 1996; Amato and Booth 2001; Cui, Fincham, and Pasley 2008; Herzog and Cooney 2002; Sanders, Halford, and Behrens 1999; Stocker and Richmond 2007; Yu and Adler-Baeder 2007). These results suggest that socialization can be both positive and negative, which is an important distinction. Strengthening relationships between parents and children in adolescence could lead to strengthened romantic relationships for those children when they transition to adulthood.

Somewhat surprisingly, personality did not account for the effects of socialization much at all. This study suggests that socialization and personality traits tend to operate independently of one another. This finding is an important, and surprising, one, since both genetics and the environment shapes an individual's personality traits. Since children inherit at least part of their personality traits from parents, and parents' personalities are tied up with their socialization practices with children, it seemed plausible that socialization would operate through personality. These results, however, do not support this assertion. Rather, the findings suggest that socialization operates independently of personality, and that the role of personality on romantic relationship quality is small. It is unclear why personality traits do not seem to matter much with regard to romantic relationship quality. It may be that it is not the personality traits of the individual within a relationship, but rather the combination of personality traits between the two individuals involved in the romantic relationship that matter with regard to

romantic relationship quality. In addition, I only examined the association between personality and romantic relationship quality in models that already accounted for the role of socialization because I hypothesized that personality would mediate the association of socialization with relationship quality. It may very well be that the association between personality and romantic relationship quality is stronger in a bivariate model, which does not include any socialization measures.

#### *Role of Adolescent Romantic Relationships*

Results from Chapter 4 suggest that there are five classes of adolescent romantic relationship type: intense, affectionate, casual, multi-intense, and multi-varied. These findings are important because despite interest in adolescent romantic relationships, knowledge of the content and quality of these relationships has been relatively lacking (Collins 2003). Furthermore, this study is one of the first to study adolescents' romantic relationship type with national data. These findings suggest that approximately 75% of adolescents who engage in romantic relationships only report one romantic relationship in the past 18 months, which indicates that most adolescents do not engage in many transitory romantic relationships. The most prevalent adolescent romantic relationship type is an intensive one, which is marked by a high likelihood of social, romantic, and sexual events occurring within the union. But, the next two most prevalent adolescent romantic relationship types are ones marked by a low likelihood of sexual events occurring within the relationship. This finding is important because a large focus of adolescent relationship research has centered on sexual relationships (Carver, Joyner, and Udry 2003). These results suggest that this focus is a limited one, as it fails to capture the experiences of all adolescents within their romantic relationships.

When looking at group variations in adolescent romantic relationship types, I find differences by both age and race/ethnicity. Younger adolescents are more likely to be non-sexual (i.e. affectionate and casual) while older adolescents are more likely to be sexual (i.e. intensive). This result is probably not surprising, as it seems likely that relationships would intensify as individuals age. Results do also suggest some racial/ethnic differences. Blacks seem to be the most likely to be sexual, with Asians and those classified as Other Race the least likely. Furthermore, both Asians and Latinos are more likely than Blacks and Whites to be affectionate. While there are variations by race/ethnicity and age, there do not, however, appear to be much in the way of differences by gender. Males and females appear to be relatively similar.

The construction of classes of adolescents' romantic relationship type not only furthered our understanding of adolescent romantic relationships, but it also allowed me to examine if an adolescent's romantic relationship type influences romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. Results do suggest that an adolescent's romantic relationship type influences romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. In particular, the results indicate that the membership in the affectionate class is the most positive with regard to romantic relationship quality in young adulthood, and that compared to membership in the affectionate class, membership in the two multiple classes were the most negative with regard to romantic relationship quality. These findings suggest, therefore, that multiple relationships in a short period of time during adolescence may be linked with lower romantic relationship quality in young adulthood. This finding is important because it has potential policy implications. Parents should be informed about the importance of adolescent romantic relationships; these relationships do seem to matter with regard to

later outcomes. In particular, parents should not treat adolescent romantic relationships as mere puppy-love, as a substantial proportion of the relationships seem to mirror adult relationships in terms of the content of social, romantic, and sexual activities that take place within the union. In fact, we may want to view these relationships as a “testing grounds” of sorts, where adolescents first learn how to relate to a romantic partner, etc. Parents, therefore, may want to encourage their adolescent children to form stable relationships that center on affection and caring in adolescence and discourage relationships marked by instability and variability.

### **STUDY LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

While this current work broadens our understanding of romantic relationship quality and parenting in young adulthood, it is not without any shortcomings. One limitation of this work is that while this work is based on nationally-representative data, the study is based on a relatively young adult sample, and as such, can only inform discussion on romantic relationship quality and parenting in young adulthood. It is unclear if the results found here are generalizable to older age groups. Future work that follows the Add Health respondents as they age will be very enlightening with regard to how romantic relationship quality and parenting may vary across an individual’s life course.

A second concern is that this work is interested in family relationships, which means that there is more than one individual involved in the relationships I study. I only have reports on romantic relationships and the quality within those relationships from one partner in the union. Data from both partners would give the broadest and best understanding of romantic relationships and the quality within those relationships. For

example, having data from both romantic partners would allow one to examine how closely each partner's assessment of the relationship matches the other's assessment. The individual's perception of the relationship may indeed be more important for future outcomes than his or her partner's perception, but in order to definitively determine which is more important, longitudinal data from both partners are needed. In addition, this study's contributions to the parenting literature are rather limited as this paper was not able to examine much with regard to parenting behaviors, other than language usage with children. Future work that can examine parenting behaviors will better broaden our understanding of the parent-child relationship in young adulthood.

A few additional limitations arise within each chapter. In Chapter 2, due to small cell sizes, I had to collapse some categories and create broad racial/ethnic categorizations. While this study contributes to the literature by including Asians and Latinos in the analysis, the ideal analysis would be one in which the different ethnic groups within these broad categories could be examined individually (i.e. Mexicans separate from Cubans, Chinese separate from Filipinos). Future work can hopefully build on this work by examining whether there are differences within each broad ethnic category in both romantic relationship quality and parenting.

In Chapter 3, the data for the socialization measures come from the Wave I questionnaire, and thus were based on one time point. Having repeated socialization observations can better help our understanding of the role that the family of origin has on romantic relationship quality, as it will give us a richer and more detailed understanding of the family of origin environment. The socialization measures examined in Chapter 3 were also collected in the Wave II questionnaire. I chose not to include these measures,

as it would have reduced my sample size, and I wanted to include as many respondents in my analysis. Future work, though, could incorporate these measures into the analysis, as it will further develop our understanding of the association between socialization and young adult romantic relationship quality.

Similarly, in Chapter 4, it is important to note that the longitudinal data for the adolescent romantic relationships were collected retrospectively at one point in time. To fully be able to understand how adolescent romantic relationships influence young adult romantic relationship quality, a prospective longitudinal design of romantic relationship histories from adolescence into adulthood would improve the mapping of relationship trajectories. In addition, the data focused solely on the content of the adolescent romantic relationships; there were not any quality measures, such as levels of satisfaction and happiness with the relationship. Knowing the quality of adolescent romantic relationships would first broaden our understanding of the nature of adolescent romantic relationships. In addition, it would also help better inform how adolescent romantic relationships may influence the quality of later relationships. Finally, having the same romantic relationship measures collected in adolescence, along with adulthood, would be ideal. This type of data would allow researchers to much more fully understand the trajectory of an individual's romantic relationships.

## **STUDY CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

This study makes both theoretical and methodological contributions to the literature on romantic relationship quality and parenting. First, the use of nationally-representative, longitudinal data allows this study to inform how adolescence influences family relationships within young adulthood including all race, ethnic, and



socioeconomic population subgroups in the United States. This study does not need to rely on cross-sectional data, as many studies that examine family relationships do.

Furthermore its national representativeness means that its results are generalizable.

In addition, the examination of all immigrant generations adds to our understanding of how the first and second generation compare to the third generation as they transition to young adulthood. This study focused on an aspect of family relationships, romantic relationship quality, which has often been overlooked in the study of differences by generation (Glick 2010) so it can really contribute and add to our knowledge on the assimilation process of the first and second generation as they age. In addition, by examining all three immigrant generations, this study also contributes to our understanding of romantic relationship quality and parenting across all racial and ethnic groups within the United States.

This study makes a further theoretical contribution in its examination of the role that both socialization and personality play on romantic relationship in young adulthood. There has been a large body of work that focuses on the importance of each mechanism, but this study is one of the first that has examined the importance of both with nationally-representative, longitudinal data. Results from this study suggest that both mechanisms should be accounted for in trying to understand factors that predict romantic relationship quality.

In addition, this study makes an important methodological and theoretical advance in its use of latent class analysis (LCA). LCA provides a more inductive approach to understanding romantic relationships, and it is an advance over previous studies that have focused solely on reporting percentages of adolescents who report

engaging in a specific social, romantic, or sexual activity within their adolescent romantic relationships (Carver, Joyner, and Udry 2002; O’Sullivan et al. 2007). LCA allows us to have a better sense of adolescent’s romantic relationship types. Beyond informing us on the adolescents’ romantic relationship type, LCA also allows us to understand how prevalent each type is.

Finally, this study’s analysis of family relationships is not limited to one “type” of relationship. In the romantic relationship quality analyses, it includes all married, cohabiting, and dating individuals. A large body of work has focused on relationship quality within marriages, and in recent years, it has become increasingly common to study quality within cohabitations, either separately or in comparison to marriages. Fewer studies, though, have examined quality within dating unions, and even fewer have had the data to examine all three relationship types together. This study, therefore, really informs on the nature of romantic relationship quality in its entirety in the United States.

Most importantly, this study indicates that to fully understand romantic relationship quality and parenting in young adulthood, one needs to look “backwards” to adolescence. It also suggests that longitudinal data are necessary for exploring and understanding familial relationships. This work is especially relevant for policymakers and those who are interested in promoting healthy relationships in adulthood because this study suggests that interventions earlier in an individual’s life may be fruitful with regard to the quality of relationships they form in adulthood.

In particular, this study confirms the existence of a relationship trajectory in which relationships, both with parents and romantic partners, in early adolescence are related to relationships in adulthood. This study suggests, therefore, that there are

beneficial implications for individuals involved in high quality relationships during adolescence, but it also suggests that there are negative consequences, such as conflict, lower levels of satisfaction, lower partner affection, and lower future relationship orientation for those involved in low quality adolescent relationships. My dissertation has provided evidence that individuals tend to remain on a similar “quality” in their relationship trajectory throughout their life course. It is important, therefore, to find a means to divert individuals who experience low quality relationships in adolescence toward higher quality trajectories. Strengthening parent-child relationships in adolescence and teaching adolescents the importance of forming healthy (i.e. relationships high in affection and stability) romantic relationships may be two important avenues through which high quality relationships develop for individuals as they transition to adulthood. In addition, structural factors, like race and socioeconomic status, should be considered as well. This study, along with others, indicates the importance of these structural factors on relationships so policies that seek to address these factors will most likely influence relationships as well. For example, policies that are designed to decrease economic hardship and strengthen financial stability for families will most likely also strengthen relationships between family members.

## TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 2.1 Means of Relationship Quality, Relationship Type, and Independent Variables by Immigrant Generation

	<i>Generation 1</i>	<i>Generation 2</i>	<i>Generation 3</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Range</i>
Relationship Quality					
<i>Satisfaction</i>	3.96	3.91	3.91	3.91	1-5
<i>Partner's Affection</i>	4.34	4.30	4.32	4.32	1-5
<i>Satisfaction w/Sex</i>	4.16 <sup>^</sup>	4.04	4.03	4.04	1-5
<i>Contentment</i>	3.61	3.61	3.64	3.64	1-4
Relationship Type					
<i>Married</i>	0.73	0.65	0.69	0.69	0-1
<i>Cohabiting</i>	0.14**	0.19	0.21	0.20	0-1
<i>Dating</i>	0.13	0.15*	0.10	0.11	0-1
Sex					
<i>Male</i>	0.47	0.49	0.49	0.49	0-1
<i>Female</i>	0.53	0.51	0.51	0.51	0-1
Ethnicity					
<i>LATINO</i>	0.59***	0.47***	0.05	0.12	
<i>Mexican</i>	0.28	0.28	0.03	0.07	0-1
<i>Cuban</i>	0.04	0.05	0.00	0.01	0-1
<i>Central-South American</i>	0.26	0.09	0.01	0.03	0-1
<i>Puerto Rican</i>	0.02	0.05	0.01	0.01	0-1
<i>ASIAN</i>	0.33***	0.16***	0.01	0.04	
<i>Chinese</i>	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.00	0-1
<i>Philippine</i>	0.14	0.05	0.00	0.01	0-1
<i>Other Asian</i>	0.16	0.09	0.00	0.02	0-1
<i>African-Afro Caribbean (Black)</i>	0.02***	0.06***	0.14	0.12	0-1
<i>European/Canadian (White)</i>	0.06***	0.30***	0.81	0.72	0-1
Family Structure					
<i>2 biological or 2 adopted parents</i>	0.59	0.66**	0.58	0.59	0-1
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>	0.15	0.13*	0.16	0.16	0-1
<i>Single mom</i>	0.17	0.14	0.18	0.17	0-1
<i>Single dad</i>	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.03	0-1
<i>2 step-parents/other</i>	0.07	0.04*	0.05	0.05	0-1
Parents Attended	0.28	0.31	0.35	0.34	0-1
College or More					
Attended College + Hardship	0.36	0.36	0.34	0.35	0-1
Previously Cohabited	0.34*	0.46	0.48	0.47	0-1
Previously Married	0.11***	0.16***	0.25	0.23	0-1
Age	0.01*	0.01	0.02	0.01	0-1
Same-Race Couple	29.05**	28.35	28.37	28.40	25-36
Immigrant Generation	0.78*	0.70***	0.86	0.84	0-1
<i>Generation 1</i>	-----	-----	-----	0.05	0-1
<i>Generation 2</i>	-----	-----	-----	0.11	0-1
<i>Generation 3</i>	-----	-----	-----	0.85	0-1
<b>N (total = 8,358)</b>	614	1,215	6,529	8,358	

Note: \* indicates a statistically significant difference from Generation 3, using a two-tailed ttest

\*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*\*p<0.001

Table 2.2 Means of Parenting Views, Language Spoken with Children, Relationship Type, and Independent Variables by Immigrant Generation

	<i>Generation 1</i>	<i>Generation 2</i>	<i>Generation 3</i>	<i>Total Sample</i>	<i>Range</i>
Parenting Views					
<i>Contentment</i>	0.70	0.72	0.74	0.74	0-1
<i>Stress</i>	2.33*	2.14	2.14	2.15	1-5
Language Spoken w/Kids					
<i>English</i>	0.55***	0.75***	0.99	0.95	0-1
<i>NON-ENGLISH</i>	0.25***	0.08***	0.00	0.02	
<i>Spanish</i>	0.24***	0.07***	0.00	0.02	0-1
<i>Other Language</i>	0.02^	0.00	0.00	0.00	0-1
<i>English + Other Lang.</i>	0.20***	0.17***	0.01	0.03	0-1
Relationship Type					
<i>Married</i>	0.78*	0.74	0.69	0.70	0-1
<i>Cohabiting</i>	0.20*	0.24	0.27	0.27	0-1
<i>Single</i>	0.01*	0.02	0.03	0.03	0-1
Sex					
<i>Male</i>	0.37	0.44	0.44	0.43	0-1
<i>Female</i>	0.63	0.56	0.56	0.57	0-1
Ethnicity					
<i>LATINO</i>	0.67***	0.53***	0.05	0.12	0-1
<i>Mexican</i>	0.35	0.37	0.04	0.08	0-1
<i>Cuban</i>	0.04	0.03	0.00	0.00	0-1
<i>Central-South American</i>	0.26	0.06	0.01	0.02	0-1
<i>Puerto Rican</i>	0.01	0.07	0.01	0.01	0-1
<i>ASIAN</i>	0.26***	0.12***	0.01	0.03	0-1
<i>Chinese</i>	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0-1
<i>Philippine</i>	0.15	0.04	0.00	0.01	0-1
<i>Other Asian</i>	0.10	0.07	0.00	0.01	0-1
<i>African-Afro Caribbean (Black)</i>	0.04***	0.05***	0.21	0.19	0-1
<i>European/Canadian (White)</i>	0.04***	0.29***	0.73	0.66	0-1
Family Structure					
<i>Two biological or two adopted parents</i>	0.51	0.56*	0.47	0.48	0-1
<i>One step-parent + one biological parent</i>	0.17	0.16	0.19	0.19	0-1
<i>Single mom</i>	0.20	0.17^	0.23	0.22	0-1
<i>Single dad</i>	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0-1
<i>Two step-parents/other</i>	0.08	0.07	0.08	0.08	0-1
Parents Attended College or More	0.22	0.21	0.23	0.23	0-1
Attended College or More	0.17	0.20	0.17	0.17	0-1
Hardship	0.56^	0.67	0.72	0.71	0-6
Number of Children	1.89	1.89	1.84	1.84	1-4
Age	29.44**	28.66	28.59	28.63	26-35
Immigrant Generation					
<i>Generation 1</i>	-----	-----	-----	0.04	0-1
<i>Generation 2</i>	-----	-----	-----	0.09	0-1
<i>Generation 3</i>	-----	-----	-----	0.87	0-1
<b>N (total = 7,050 )</b>	421	871	5,758	7,050	

Note: \* indicates a statistically significant difference from Generation 3, using a two-tailed ttest  
 \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

Table 2.3 Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Satisfaction (N = 8,358)

	<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>		<b>Model 3</b>	
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>						
<i>Generation 1</i>	0.05	(0.06)	0.11 <sup>^</sup>	(0.07)	0.04	(0.07)
<i>Generation 2</i>	-0.00	(0.05)	0.06	(0.06)	0.03	(0.06)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>						
<i>Black</i>			-0.28***	(0.04)	-0.14***	(0.04)
<i>Asian</i>			0.04	(0.08)	0.06	(0.07)
<i>Latino</i>			-0.21***	(0.05)	-0.12*	(0.06)
Relationship Type <sup>d</sup>						
<i>Cohabitation</i>					-0.11**	(0.03)
<i>Dating</i>					-0.18***	(0.05)
Male					0.06*	(0.02)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>						
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>					-0.09*	(0.04)
<i>Single mom</i>					-0.03	(0.04)
<i>Single dad</i>					-0.00	(0.07)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>					0.02	(0.06)
Parents Attended College or More					-0.00	(0.03)
Attended College or More					0.13***	(0.03)
Hardship					-0.21***	(0.01)
Same-Race Couple					0.08*	(0.04)
Previously Cohabited					-0.07 <sup>^</sup>	(0.04)
Previously Married					-0.02	(0.12)
Age					-0.01	(0.01)
Constant	3.91***	(0.02)	3.96***	(0.02)	4.16***	(0.24)
<b>R2</b>	0.00		0.01		0.08	

Standard Errors in Parentheses

<sup>^</sup>  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is "Marriage"

Table 2.4 Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Partner Affection (N = 8,358)

	<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>		<b>Model 3</b>	
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>						
<i>Generation 1</i>	0.02	(0.05)	0.09	(0.06)	0.05	(0.06)
<i>Generation 2</i>	-0.02	(0.04)	0.04	(0.05)	0.00	(0.05)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>						
<i>Black</i>			-0.25***	(0.03)	-0.14***	(0.04)
<i>Asian</i>			0.01	(0.08)	0.00	(0.08)
<i>Latino</i>			-0.18***	(0.05)	-0.10 <sup>^</sup>	(0.05)
Relationship Type <sup>d</sup>						
<i>Cohabitation</i>					0.04	(0.03)
<i>Dating</i>					-0.08*	(0.04)
Male					0.13***	(0.02)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>						
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>					-0.09*	(0.04)
<i>Single mom</i>					-0.07*	(0.03)
<i>Single dad</i>					-0.10	(0.07)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>					-0.03	(0.06)
Parents Attended College or More					0.08**	(0.03)
Attended College or More					0.17***	(0.02)
Hardship					-0.11***	(0.01)
Same-Race Couple					0.03	(0.04)
Previously Cohabited					-0.12**	(0.04)
Previously Married					-0.12	(0.14)
Age					-0.02**	(0.01)
Constant	4.32***	(0.02)	4.36***	(0.02)	4.90***	(0.22)
<b>R2</b>	0.00		0.01		0.07	

Standard Errors in Parentheses

<sup>^</sup>  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is "Marriage"

Table 2.5 Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Satisfaction with Sex (N = 8,358)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>						
<i>Generation 1</i>	0.13 <sup>^</sup>	(0.07)	0.18*	(0.09)	0.18*	(0.09)
<i>Generation 2</i>	0.01	(0.05)	0.04	(0.06)	0.03	(0.06)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>						
<i>Black</i>			-0.03	(0.04)	0.01	(0.04)
<i>Asian</i>			-0.14	(0.12)	-0.12	(0.12)
<i>Latino</i>			-0.02	(0.07)	-0.02	(0.08)
Relationship Type <sup>d</sup>						
<i>Cohabitation</i>					0.01	(0.05)
<i>Dating</i>					0.02	(0.05)
Male					-0.00	(0.03)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>						
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>					-0.05	(0.04)
<i>Single mom</i>					-0.08 <sup>^</sup>	(0.04)
<i>Single dad</i>					0.02	(0.08)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>					0.04	(0.07)
Parents Attended College or More					-0.01	(0.04)
Attended College or More					-0.08*	(0.04)
Hardship					-0.05**	(0.02)
Same-Race Couple					0.03	(0.05)
Previously Cohabited					-0.09*	(0.04)
Previously Married					0.12	(0.13)
Age					-0.03**	(0.01)
Constant	4.03***	(0.02)	4.03***	(0.02)	4.92***	(0.33)
<b>R2</b>	0.00		0.00		0.01	

Standard Errors in Parentheses

<sup>^</sup>  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is "Marriage"



Table 2.6 Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Contentment (N = 8,358)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>						
<i>Generation 1</i>	-0.03	(0.04)	0.01	(0.05)	-0.02	(0.04)
<i>Generation 2</i>	-0.03	(0.03)	0.00	(0.04)	-0.01	(0.04)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>						
<i>Black</i>			-0.22***	(0.02)	-0.15***	(0.03)
<i>Asian</i>			-0.03	(0.06)	-0.01	(0.06)
<i>Latino</i>			-0.11**	(0.04)	-0.05	(0.04)
Relationship Type <sup>d</sup>						
<i>Cohabitation</i>					-0.01	(0.02)
<i>Dating</i>					-0.34***	(0.04)
Male					-0.01	(0.02)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>						
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>					-0.03	(0.02)
<i>Single mom</i>					-0.03	(0.02)
<i>Single dad</i>					-0.07	(0.06)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>					0.01	(0.03)
Parents Attended College or More					0.04*	(0.02)
Attended College or More					0.09***	(0.02)
Hardship					-0.07***	(0.01)
Same-Race Couple					0.02	(0.02)
Previously Cohabited					-0.11***	(0.03)
Previously Married					-0.02	(0.09)
Age					-0.01	(0.01)
Constant	3.64***	(0.01)	3.68***	(0.01)	3.95***	(0.16)
<b>R2</b>	0.00		0.02		0.08	

Standard Errors in Parentheses

<sup>^</sup>  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is "Marriage"

Table 2.7 Logistic Regression of Parental Contentment (N = 7,050)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>						
<i>Generation 1</i>	0.82	(0.12)	0.88	(0.16)	0.82	(0.15)
<i>Generation 2</i>	0.90	(0.11)	0.95	(0.12)	0.91	(0.12)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>						
<i>Black</i>			0.70***	(0.07)	0.94	(0.10)
<i>Asian</i>			1.05	(0.19)	1.09	(0.20)
<i>Latino</i>			0.79*	(0.08)	0.88	(0.10)
Relationship Type <sup>d</sup>						
<i>Cohabitation</i>					0.61***	(0.06)
<i>Single</i>					0.69^	(0.15)
Male					0.70***	(0.06)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>						
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>					0.87^	(0.07)
<i>Single mom</i>					0.99	(0.10)
<i>Single dad</i>					0.87	(0.20)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>					0.84	(0.12)
Parents Attended College or More					0.84*	(0.07)
Attended College or More					1.20^	(0.12)
Hardship					0.86***	(0.02)
Number of Children					0.88**	(0.04)
Age					0.94**	(0.02)
<b>F</b>	1.40		3.95		6.85	

*Presents Odds Ratios; Standard Errors in Parentheses*

<sup>^</sup>*p* < .10. \**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001.

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is “Generation 3”

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is “White”

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is “2 Biological or Adoptive Parents”

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is “Marriage”

Table 2.8 Linear Regression of Parental Stress (N = 7,050)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>						
<i>Generation 1</i>	0.20*	(0.09)	0.17	(0.11)	0.21 <sup>^</sup>	(0.12)
<i>Generation 2</i>	0.01	(0.06)	-0.02	(0.07)	-0.01	(0.06)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>						
<i>Black</i>			0.08*	(0.04)	-0.04	(0.04)
<i>Asian</i>			-0.05	(0.09)	-0.06	(0.09)
<i>Latino</i>			0.09	(0.06)	0.03	(0.06)
Relationship Type <sup>d</sup>						
<i>Cohabitation</i>					0.12***	(0.03)
<i>Single</i>					0.13	(0.12)
Male					-0.08*	(0.04)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>						
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>					-0.04	(0.04)
<i>Single mom</i>					-0.01	(0.04)
<i>Single dad</i>					0.17	(0.11)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>					0.05	(0.06)
Parents Attended College or More					0.02	(0.03)
Attended College or More					-0.00	(0.04)
Hardship					0.06***	(0.01)
Number of Children					0.16**	(0.02)
Age					-0.01	(0.01)
Constant	2.14***	(0.02)	2.11***	(0.02)		
<b>R2</b>	0.00		0.00		0.04	

*Standard Errors in Parentheses*

<sup>^</sup>*p* < .10. \**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001.

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is “Generation 3”

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is “White”

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is “2 Biological or Adoptive Parents”

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is “Marriage”

Table 2.9 Logistic Regression of Speaking English with Children at Home (N = 7,050)

	<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>		<b>Model 3</b>	
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>						
<i>Generation 1</i>	0.02***	(0.00)	0.09***	(0.02)	0.10***	(0.02)
<i>Generation 2</i>	0.05***	(0.01)	0.17***	(0.04)	0.18***	(0.04)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>						
<i>Black</i>			1.02	(0.36)	0.85	(0.32)
<i>Asian</i>			0.28***	(0.11)	0.29**	(0.11)
<i>Latino</i>			0.09***	(0.02)	0.07***	(0.00)
Relationship Type <sup>d</sup>						
<i>Cohabitation</i>					2.31***	(0.55)
<i>Single</i>					1.41	(0.75)
Male					1.13	(0.18)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>						
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>					1.61^	(0.20)
<i>Single mom</i>					0.91	(0.20)
<i>Single dad</i>					0.68	(0.30)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>					0.78	(0.24)
Parents Attended College or More					0.95	(0.21)
Attended College or More					0.94	(0.21)
Hardship					0.94	(0.06)
Number of Children					1.19*	(0.10)
Age					0.93	(0.05)
<b>F</b>	142.49		77.16		29.52	

Presents Odds Ratios; Standard Errors in Parentheses

^  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is "Marriage"

Table 2.10 Multinomial Logistic Regression of Language Spoken with Children (N = 1,076)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
<b>English + Other Lang</b>						
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>						
<i>Generation 1</i>	0.41***	(0.08)	0.38***	(0.08)	0.37***	(0.09)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>						
<i>Latino</i>			0.27*	(0.14)	0.33*	(0.18)
Relationship Type <sup>d</sup>						
<i>Cohabitation</i>					1.11	(0.47)
<i>Single</i>					3.45	(3.49)
Male					0.95	(0.31)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>						
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>					1.43	(0.62)
<i>Single mom</i>					0.67	(0.27)
<i>Single dad</i>					1.02	(1.09)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>					1.21	(0.60)
Parents Attended College or More					1.51	(0.54)
Attended College or More					1.52	(0.60)
Hardship					0.87	(0.13)
Number of Children					0.90	(0.14)
Age					1.02	(0.07)
<b>English Only</b>						
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>						
<i>Generation 1</i>	0.35***	(0.10)	0.29***	(0.07)	0.30***	(0.08)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>						
<i>Latino</i>			0.13***	(0.08)	0.13***	(0.07)
Relationship Type <sup>d</sup>						
<i>Cohabitation</i>					2.31*	(0.95)
<i>Single</i>					1.84	(2.15)
Male					1.32	(0.36)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>						
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>					2.61**	(0.94)
<i>Single mom</i>					1.10	(0.48)
<i>Single dad</i>					0.65	(0.57)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>					0.94	(0.40)
Parents Attended College or More					2.12*	(0.74)
Attended College or More					1.44	(0.63)
Hardship					0.95	(0.13)
Number of Children					1.15	(0.15)
Age					0.92	(0.07)
<b>F</b>	12.17		11.35		3.35	

Presents Relative Risks, or Odds; Standard Errors in Parentheses

<sup>^</sup>  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

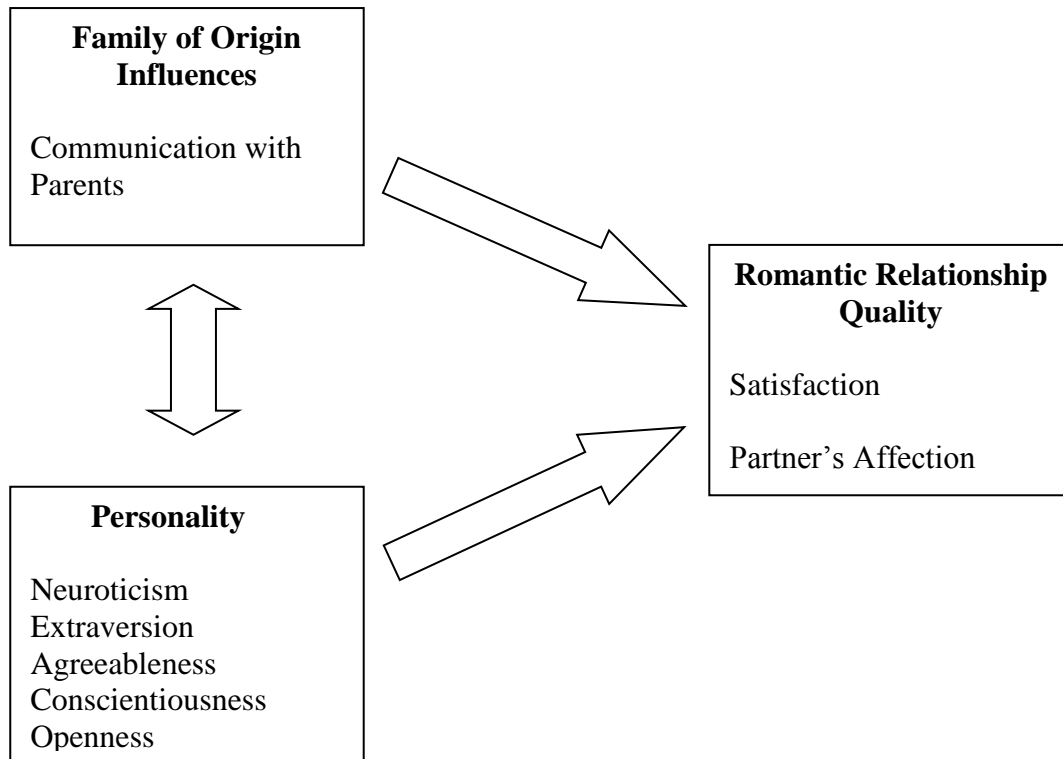
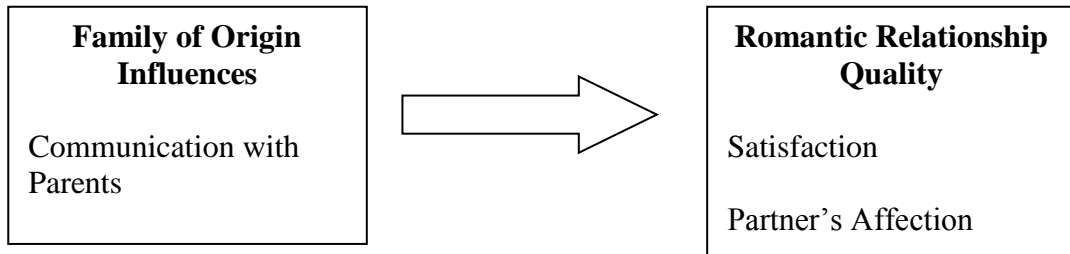
<sup>a</sup> Reference category is “Generation 2”

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is “Asian”

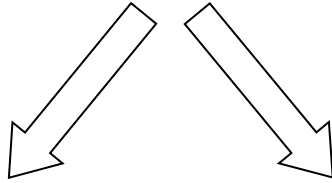
<sup>c</sup> Reference category is “2 Biological or Adoptive Parents”

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is “Marriage”

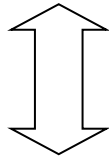
**Figure 3.1 Conceptual Model of Relationship between Family of Origin, Personality, and Relationship Quality in Young Adulthood**



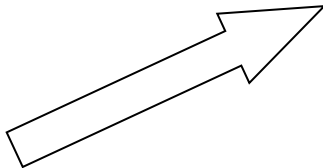
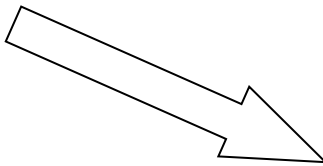
**Family of Origin (family structure, parental education, etc.)**  
**And**  
**Background Characteristics (gender, race, relationship type etc.)**



**Family of Origin Influences**  
Communication with Parents



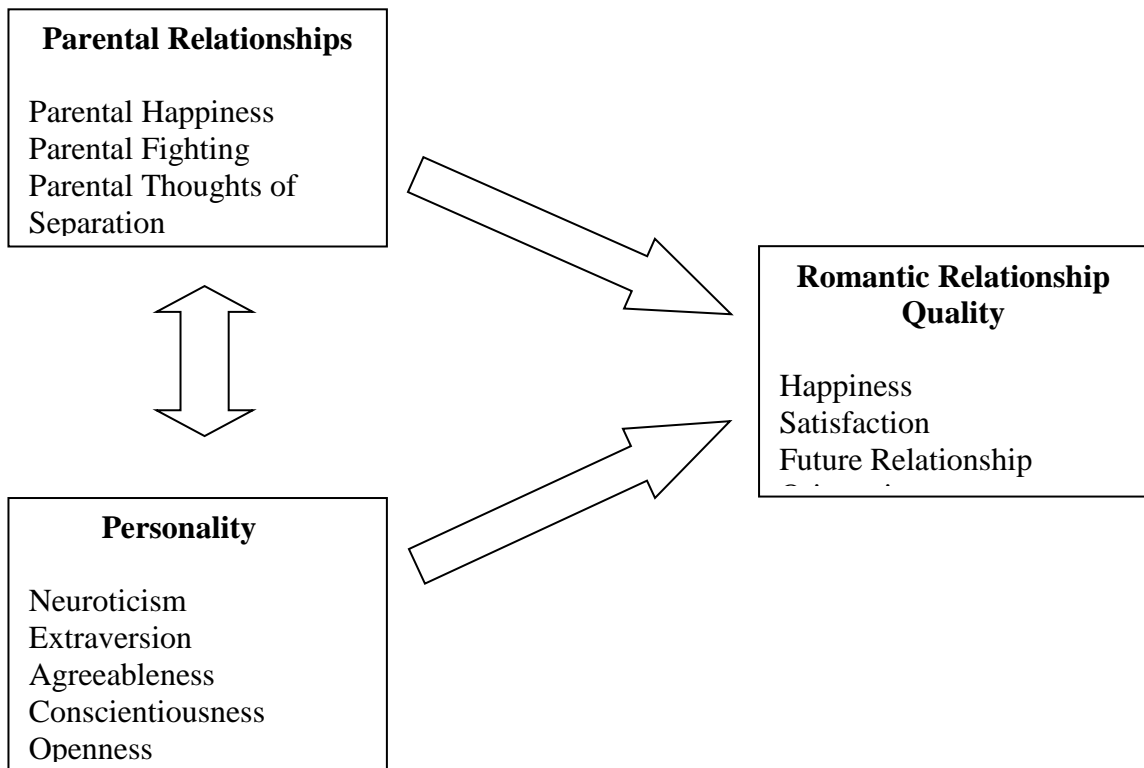
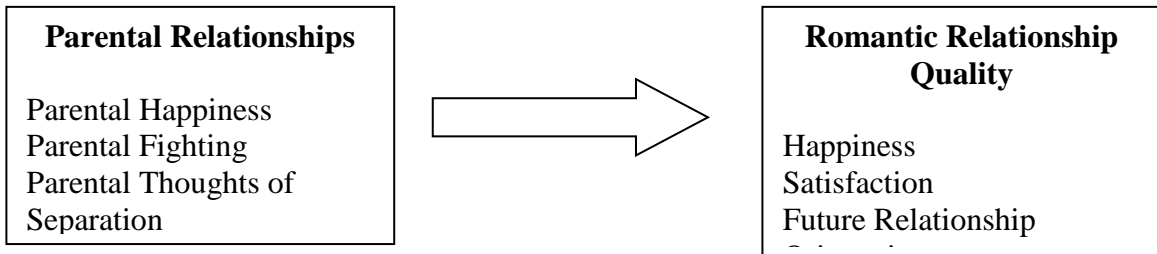
**Personality**  
Neuroticism  
Extraversion  
Agreeableness  
Conscientiousness  
Openness



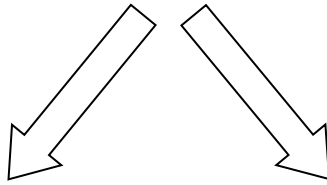
**Romantic Relationship Quality**  
Satisfaction  
Partner's Affection



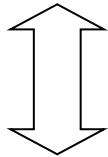
**Figure 3.2 Conceptual Model of Relationship between Parental Relationships, Personality, and Relationship Quality in Young Adulthood**



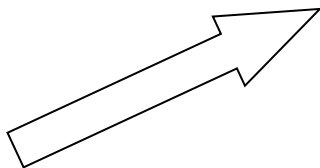
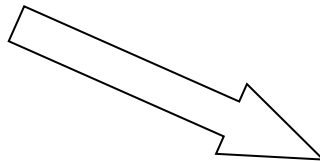
**Family of Origin (family structure, parental education, etc.)**  
**And**  
**Background Characteristics (gender, race, relationship type etc.)**



**Parental Relationships**  
Parental Happiness  
Parental Fighting  
Parental Thoughts of Separation



**Personality**  
Neuroticism  
Extraversion  
Agreeableness  
Conscientiousness  
Openness



**Romantic Relationship Quality**  
Happiness  
Satisfaction  
Future Relationship Orientation

Table 3.1 Means of Partner Relationship Quality, Parent-Child Relationship Quality, and Independent Variables by Relationship Type

	<i>Married</i>	<i>Cohabiting</i>	<i>Dating</i>	<i>Total Sample</i>	<i>Range</i>
Partner Relationship Quality					
<i>Satisfaction</i>	3.96	3.80***	3.87	3.91	1-5
<i>Partner's Affection</i>	4.31	4.33	4.37	4.32	1-5
Parent-Child Relationship					
<i>Affection</i>	4.51	4.55^	4.60	4.53	1-5
<i>Communication</i>	3.99	4.09*	4.17	4.03	1-5
Personality					
<i>Neuroticism</i>	10.24	10.56**	9.98^	10.28	4-20
<i>Extraversion</i>	13.15	13.42*	13.21	13.21	4-20
<i>Agreeableness</i>	15.34	14.96***	15.36	15.26	4-20
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	14.68	14.51	14.57	14.63	4-20
<i>Openness</i>	14.26	14.48*	14.71***	14.35	4-20
Immigrant Generation					
<i>Generation 1</i>	0.05	0.03*	0.06	0.05	0-1
<i>Generation 2</i>	0.10	0.10	0.14*	0.11	0-1
<i>Generation 3</i>	0.85	0.87	0.80*	0.85	0-1
Sex					
<i>Male</i>	0.46	0.53***	0.63***	0.49	0-1
<i>Female</i>	0.54	0.47***	0.37***	0.51	0-1
Ethnicity					
<i>White</i>	0.75	0.65***	0.63***	0.72	0-1
<i>Black</i>	0.09	0.20***	0.16***	0.12	0-1
<i>Asian</i>	0.03	0.03	0.06*	0.03	0-1
<i>Native American/Other</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0-1
<i>Latino</i>	0.12	0.11	0.14	0.12	0-1
Family Structure					
<i>2 biological or 2 adopted parents</i>	0.61	0.53***	0.68**	0.60	0-1
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>	0.17	0.17	0.10***	0.16	0-1
<i>Single mom</i>	0.16	0.23***	0.17	0.18	0-1
<i>Single dad</i>	0.02	0.04*	0.03	0.03	0-1
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0-1
Parents Attended College or More	0.34	0.30	0.50***	0.35	0-1
Attended College or More	0.34	0.27***	0.57***	0.35	0-1
Hardship	0.43	0.63***	0.25***	0.45	1-6
Previously Cohabited	0.25	0.27	0.00***	0.23	0-1
Previously Married	0.02	0.00***	0.00***	0.01	0-1
Age	28.62	27.80***	27.67***	28.35	26-35
Relationship Type					
<i>Marriage</i>	-----	-----	-----	0.69	0-1
<i>Cohabitation</i>	-----	-----	-----	0.20	0-1
<i>Dating</i>	-----	-----	-----	0.11	0-1
<b>N (total = 8,208)</b>	5,680	1,611	917	8,208	

^  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 3.2 Means of Partner Relationship Quality, Parent's Relationship Quality, and Independent Variables by Relationship Type

	<i>Married</i>	<i>Cohabiting</i>	<i>Dating</i>	<i>Total Sample</i>	<i>Range</i>
Partner Relationship Quality					
<i>Happiness</i>	0.79	0.71***	0.55***	0.75	0-1
<i>Satisfaction w/Disagreements</i>	4.04	3.84***	3.97	3.99	1-5
<i>Future Orientation</i>	4.13	3.98***	3.22***	4.00	1-4.5
Parental Relationship Quality					
<i>Happiness</i>	0.59	0.54^	0.56	0.57	0-1
<i>Fighting</i>	2.15	2.21^	2.25*	2.17	1-4
<i>Thoughts of Separation</i>	0.12	0.14	0.09*	0.12	0-1
Personality					
<i>Neuroticism</i>	10.21	10.47^	9.99	10.24	4-20
<i>Extraversion</i>	13.17	13.55**	13.50^	13.28	4-20
<i>Agreeableness</i>	15.32	15.07^	15.45	15.29	4-20
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	14.69	14.58	14.68	14.66	4-20
<i>Openness</i>	14.27	14.54*	14.81***	14.38	4-20
Immigrant Generation					
<i>Generation 1</i>	0.04	0.02^	0.05	0.04	0-1
<i>Generation 2</i>	0.10	0.10	0.12	0.10	0-1
<i>Generation 3</i>	0.86	0.87	0.83	0.86	0-1
Sex					
<i>Male</i>	0.47	0.53**	0.64***	0.50	0-1
<i>Female</i>	0.53	0.47**	0.36***	0.50	0-1
Ethnicity					
<i>White</i>	0.80	0.73*	0.71**	0.78	0-1
<i>Black</i>	0.06	0.14***	0.11*	0.08	0-1
<i>Asian</i>	0.03	0.03	0.05^	0.03	0-1
<i>Native American/Other</i>	0.00	0.00^	0.00	0.00	0-1
<i>Latino</i>	0.11	0.10	0.13	0.11	0-1
Family Structure					
<i>2 biological or 2 adopted parents</i>	0.72	0.68^	0.84***	0.72	0-1
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>	0.21	0.22	0.10***	0.20	0-1
<i>Single mom</i>	0.03	0.06*	0.04	0.04	0-1
<i>Single dad</i>	0.01	0.02^	0.00	0.01	0-1
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>	0.04	0.03	0.01**	0.03	0-1
Parents Attended College or More	0.36	0.32*	0.58***	0.38	0-1
Family of Origin Hardship	0.15	0.18	0.11^	0.15	0-1
Attended College or More	0.36	0.31*	0.63***	0.38	0-1
Hardship	0.40	0.59***	0.21***	0.42	1-6
Previously Cohabited	0.22	0.25	0.00***	0.21	0-1
Previously Married	0.02	0.00***	0.00***	0.01	0-1
Age	28.56	27.68***	27.54***	28.28	26-35
Relationship Type					
<i>Marriage</i>	-----	-----	-----	0.70	0-1
<i>Cohabitation</i>	-----	-----	-----	0.19	0-1

<i>Dating</i>	-----	-----	-----	0.11	0-1
<b>N (total = 5,430 )</b>	3,840	994	596	5,430	

<sup>^</sup> $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 3.3 Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Satisfaction with Young Adult Relationships (N = 8,208)

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
Communication w/Parents	0.12*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)	0.09*** (0.02)
Personality			
<i>Neuroticism</i>		-0.08*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)
<i>Extraversion</i>		0.01* (0.01)	0.01* (0.00)
<i>Agreeableness</i>		-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
<i>Conscientiousness</i>		0.02*** (0.00)	0.01* (0.00)
<i>Openness</i>		0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>			
<i>Generation 1</i>			0.07 (0.07)
<i>Generation 2</i>			0.02 (0.05)
Male			-0.02 (0.03)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>			
<i>Black</i>			-0.14*** (0.04)
<i>Asian</i>			0.02 (0.08)
<i>Native American/Other</i>			-0.01 (0.18)
<i>Latino</i>			-0.13* (0.05)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>			
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>			-0.07^ (0.04)
<i>Single mom</i>			-0.03 (0.04)
<i>Single dad</i>			0.03 (0.07)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>			0.05 (0.08)
Parents Attended College or More			-0.02 (0.03)
Attended College or More			0.09** (0.03)
Hardship			-0.17*** (0.01)
Previously Cohabited			-0.06 (0.04)
Previously Married			-0.04 (0.12)
Age			0.00 (0.01)
Relationship Type <sup>d</sup>			
<i>Cohabitation</i>			-0.09** (0.03)
<i>Dating</i>			-0.17** (0.05)
Constant	3.42*** (0.06)	3.86*** (0.18)	4.05*** (0.30)
<b>R2</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.12</b>

Standard Errors in Parentheses

<sup>^</sup>  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is “Generation 3”

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is “White”

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is “2 Biological or Adoptive Parents”

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is “Marriage”

Table 3.4 Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Partner's Affection with Young Adult Relationships (N = 8,208)

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
Parental Affection	0.23*** (0.03)	0.19*** (0.03)	0.15*** (0.03)
Personality			
<i>Neuroticism</i>		-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.00)
<i>Extraversion</i>		-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
<i>Agreeableness</i>		0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
<i>Conscientiousness</i>		0.01^ (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
<i>Openness</i>		0.02*** (0.01)	0.01^ (0.01)
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>			
<i>Generation 1</i>			0.08 (0.07)
<i>Generation 2</i>			-0.00 (0.05)
Male			0.08** (0.03)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>			
<i>Black</i>			-0.14*** (0.04)
<i>Asian</i>			-0.01 (0.09)
<i>Native American/Other</i>			0.08 (0.21)
<i>Latino</i>			-0.09^ (0.05)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>			
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>			-0.06^ (0.03)
<i>Single mom</i>			-0.07* (0.03)
<i>Single dad</i>			-0.06 (0.06)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>			0.01 (0.07)
Parents Attended College or More			0.06* (0.03)
Attended College or More			0.13*** (0.02)
Hardship			-0.09*** (0.01)
Previously Cohabited			-0.11** (0.04)
Previously Married			-0.13 (0.14)
Age			0.01^ (0.01)
Relationship Type <sup>d</sup>			
<i>Cohabitation</i>			0.06* (0.03)
<i>Dating</i>			-0.08^ (0.04)
Constant	3.29*** (0.13)	3.54*** (0.19)	4.09*** (0.28)
<b>R2</b>	0.02	0.06	0.10

Standard Errors in Parentheses

^  $p < .10$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is "Marriage"

Table 3.5 Logistic Regression of Happiness with Young Adult Relationships (N = 5,430)

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
Parent's Happiness	1.11*** (0.03)	1.10*** (0.03)	1.10** (0.03)
Personality			
<i>Neuroticism</i>		0.87*** (0.01)	0.86*** (0.02)
<i>Extraversion</i>		1.02 (0.02)	1.02 (0.02)
<i>Agreeableness</i>		1.03^ (0.02)	1.01 (0.02)
<i>Conscientiousness</i>		1.01 (0.01)	1.01 (0.01)
<i>Openness</i>		0.99 (0.02)	0.99 (0.02)
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>			
<i>Generation 1</i>			0.96 (0.24)
<i>Generation 2</i>			1.02 (0.17)
Male			0.96 (0.09)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>			
<i>Black</i>			0.49*** (0.06)
<i>Asian</i>			0.68 (0.16)
<i>Native</i>			0.64 (0.55)
<i>American/Other</i>			
<i>Latino</i>			0.81 (0.11)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>			
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>			0.73** (0.08)
<i>Single mom</i>			0.99 (0.22)
<i>Single dad</i>			1.18 (0.70)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>			0.82 (0.20)
Parents Attended College or More			1.00 (0.11)
Family of Origin Hardship Attended College or More			1.21 (0.16)
Hardship			1.29** (0.13)
Previously Cohabited			0.82*** (0.03)
Previously Married			0.89 (0.10)
Age			0.60 (0.21)
Relationship Type <sup>d</sup>			0.93** (0.02)
<i>Cohabitation</i>			0.67*** (0.07)
<i>Dating</i>			0.23*** (0.03)
<b>F</b>	14.60	17.44	13.68

Odds Ratios are Presented, Standard Errors in Parentheses

^  $p < .10$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is "Marriage"



Table 3.6 Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Satisfaction with Young Adult Relationships (N = 5,430)

	<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>		<b>Model 3</b>	
Parent's Fighting	-0.06*	(0.03)	-0.05^	(0.03)	-0.04	(0.03)
Personality						
<i>Neuroticism</i>			-0.08***	(0.01)	-0.07***	(0.00)
<i>Extraversion</i>			0.01*	(0.01)	0.01*	(0.01)
<i>Agreeableness</i>			-0.00	(0.01)	-0.02^	(0.01)
<i>Conscientiousness</i>			0.02*	(0.01)	0.01	(0.01)
<i>Openness</i>			0.01	(0.01)	0.01	(0.01)
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>						
<i>Generation 1</i>					0.00	(0.10)
<i>Generation 2</i>					0.08	(0.07)
Male					-0.08^	(0.04)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>						
<i>Black</i>					-0.20***	(0.06)
<i>Asian</i>					0.04	(0.10)
<i>Native</i>					0.09	(0.38)
<i>American/Other</i>						
<i>Latino</i>					-0.11	(0.07)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>						
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>					-0.07	(0.05)
<i>Single mom</i>					-0.05	(0.11)
<i>Single dad</i>					0.00	(0.24)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>					0.02	(0.11)
Parents Attended College or More					-0.01	(0.04)
Family of Origin Hardship					-0.01	(0.06)
Attended College or More					0.08^	(0.05)
Hardship					-0.13***	(0.02)
Previously Cohabited					-0.04	(0.06)
Previously Married					-0.24	(0.18)
Age					-0.01	(0.01)
Relationship Type <sup>d</sup>						
<i>Cohabitation</i>					-0.15***	(0.05)
<i>Dating</i>					-0.14^	(0.07)
Constant	4.12***	(0.06)	4.42***	(0.22)	5.14***	(0.41)
<b>R2</b>	0.00		0.05		0.08	

Standard Errors in Parentheses

^  $p < .10$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is "Marriage"

Table 3.7a Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Future Orientation for Married Young Adults (N = 3,840)

	<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>		<b>Model 3</b>	
Parent's Separation Thoughts	-0.27***	(0.06)	-0.26***	(0.06)	-0.19***	(0.06)
Personality						
<i>Neuroticism</i>			-0.05***	(0.01)	-0.03***	(0.01)
<i>Extraversion</i>			-0.00	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.01)
<i>Agreeableness</i>			0.01	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.01)
<i>Conscientiousness</i>			0.01	(0.01)	0.00	(0.01)
<i>Openness</i>			-0.00	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.01)
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>						
<i>Generation 1</i>					-0.03	(0.04)
<i>Generation 2</i>					-0.10	(0.11)
Male					0.02	(0.07)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>						
<i>Black</i>					-0.39***	(0.09)
<i>Asian</i>					-0.07	(0.13)
<i>Native American/Other</i>					0.21***	(0.09)
<i>Latino</i>					-0.11 <sup>^</sup>	(0.06)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>						
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>					-0.04	(0.04)
<i>Single mom</i>					0.08	(0.09)
<i>Single dad</i>					0.12	(0.27)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>					0.02	(0.10)
Parents Attended College or More					-0.00	(0.03)
Family of Origin Hardship					-0.07	(0.06)
Attended College or More					0.12***	(0.04)
Hardship					-0.09***	(0.02)
Previously Cohabited					-0.19***	(0.05)
Previously Married					-0.04	(0.13)
Age					-0.01	(0.01)
Constant	4.16***	(0.02)	4.44***	(0.18)	4.88***	(0.31)
<b>R2</b>	0.01		0.04		0.10	

Standard Errors in Parentheses

<sup>^</sup>  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

Table 3.7b Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Future Relationship Orientation for Cohabiting Young Adults (N = 994)

	<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>		<b>Model 3</b>	
Parent's Separation Thoughts Personality	-0.10	(0.09)	-0.11	(0.10)	-0.01	(0.09)
<i>Neuroticism</i>			-0.03**	(0.01)	-0.03**	(0.01)
<i>Extraversion</i>			-0.00	(0.01)	-0.01	(0.01)
<i>Agreeableness</i>			0.03*	(0.01)	0.02^	(0.01)
<i>Conscientiousness</i>			0.00	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.01)
<i>Openness</i>			0.02^	(0.01)	0.02	(0.01)
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>						
<i>Generation 1</i>					-0.04	(0.13)
<i>Generation 2</i>					-0.02	(0.09)
Male					-0.12*	(0.05)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>						
<i>Black</i>					-0.25***	(0.07)
<i>Asian</i>					-0.12	(0.10)
<i>Native American/Other</i>					0.16	(0.18)
<i>Latino</i>					-0.10	(0.09)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>						
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>					0.02	(0.06)
<i>Single mom</i>					-0.30	(0.18)
<i>Single dad</i>					0.18	(0.25)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>					-0.33*	(0.14)
Parents Attended College or More					0.02	(0.06)
Family of Origin Hardship					0.04	(0.09)
Attended College or More					0.02	(0.06)
Hardship Previously Cohabited					-0.07*	(0.03)
Age					-0.04	(0.07)
Constant	3.99***	(0.03)	4.44***	(0.18)	4.47***	(0.56)
<b>R2</b>	0.00		0.04		0.10	

*Standard Errors in Parentheses*

^  $p < .10$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

Table 3.7c Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Future Relationship Orientation for Dating Young Adults (N = 596)

	<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>		<b>Model 3</b>	
Parent's Separation Thoughts	-0.17	(0.17)	-0.18	(0.17)	0.00	(0.18)
Personality						
<i>Neuroticism</i>			-0.06*	(0.02)	-0.06**	(0.02)
<i>Extraversion</i>			-0.02	(0.02)	-0.02	(0.02)
<i>Agreeableness</i>			0.02	(0.03)	-0.01	(0.03)
<i>Conscientiousness</i>			0.02	(0.03)	0.01	(0.02)
<i>Openness</i>			-0.03	(0.03)	-0.01	(0.03)
Immigrant Generation <sup>a</sup>						
<i>Generation 1</i>					0.73***	(0.22)
<i>Generation 2</i>					0.25	(0.16)
Male					-0.42**	(0.14)
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>						
<i>Black</i>					-0.22	(0.15)
<i>Asian</i>					-0.16	(0.21)
<i>Native</i>					0.49*	(0.20)
<i>American/Other</i>						
<i>Latino</i>					-0.15	(0.20)
Family Structure <sup>c</sup>						
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>					-0.28	(0.17)
<i>Single mom</i>					-1.00*	(0.40)
<i>Single dad</i>					-0.60	(0.95)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>					-0.20	(0.24)
Parents Attended College or More					-0.33**	(0.12)
Family of Origin Hardship					0.06	(0.17)
Attended College or More					0.10	(0.14)
Hardship					-0.16	(0.10)
Age					-0.08**	(0.03)
Constant	3.24***	(0.07)	3.75***	(0.65)	6.83***	(1.05)
<b>R2</b>	0.00		0.03		0.14	

Standard Errors in Parentheses

<sup>^</sup>*p* < .10. \**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001.

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

Table 4.1 Means of Romantic Relationship Quality and Control Variables by Relationship Type (N=5,183)

	<i>Married</i>	<i>Cohabiting</i>	<i>Dating</i>	<i>Total Sample</i>	<i>Range</i>
Relationship Quality					
<i>Satisfaction</i>	3.94	3.79**	3.87	3.90	1-5
<i>Partner's Affection</i>	4.30	4.32	4.36	4.31	1-5
<i>Contentment</i>	0.60	0.48***	0.37***	0.56	0-1
<i>Satisfaction with sex</i>	4.01	4.07	4.07	4.02	1-5
<i>Overall Quality</i>	3.93	3.90	3.82*	3.92	1-4.625
Sex					
<i>Male</i>	0.44	0.56***	0.67***	0.48	0-1
<i>Female</i>	0.56	0.44***	0.33***	0.52	0-1
Immigrant Generation					
<i>First</i>	0.04	0.03	0.05	0.04	0-1
<i>Second</i>	0.09	0.11	0.13^	0.10	0-1
<i>Third</i>	0.88	0.86	0.82*	0.87	0-1
Ethnicity					
<i>White</i>	0.77	0.65***	0.68**	0.74	0-1
<i>Black</i>	0.10	0.21***	0.13^	0.12	0-1
<i>Asian</i>	0.02	0.03	0.05^	0.02	0-1
<i>Native American/Other</i>	0.00	0.00*	0.01	0.00	0-1
<i>Latino</i>	0.11	0.11	0.13	0.11	0-1
Family Structure					
<i>2 biological or 2 adopted parents</i>	0.57	0.49**	0.65*	0.56	0-1
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>	0.18	0.19	0.12*	0.17	0-1
<i>Single mom</i>	0.17	0.21*	0.16	0.17	0-1
<i>Single dad</i>	0.02	0.05**	0.04	0.03	0-1
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>	0.06	0.07	0.03*	0.06	0-1
Parent Attended College	0.33	0.33	0.51***	0.34	0-1
Attended College or More	0.34	0.28*	0.61***	0.35	0-1
Hardship	0.47	0.65*	0.29**	0.49	0-6
Previously Cohabited	0.29	0.30	0.00***	0.27	0-1
Previously Married	0.02	0.00***	0.00***	0.02	0-1
Age	28.96	28.18***	28.06***	28.74	26-35
Married	-----	-----	-----	0.73	0-1
Cohabiting	-----	-----	-----	0.19	0-1
Dating	-----	-----	-----	0.07	0-1
<b>N (total = 7,139)</b>	<b>3,813</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>5,183</b>	

Note: ^\* indicates a statistically significant difference from marriage, using a two-tailed ttest

^ p<0.10; \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

Table 4.2 Comparison of Baseline Models, Full Sample (N=12,383)

	$G^2$	BIC	AIC	DF
1 Class	133153.92	133455.49	133217.92	43046688
2 Classes	86671.87	87284.43	86801.87	43046688
3 Classes	65794.19	66717.75	65990.19	43046622
4 Classes	58504.07	59738.62	58766.07	43046589
<b>5 Classes</b>	<b>52917.29</b>	<b>54462.84</b>	<b>53245.29</b>	<b>43046556</b>

Table 4.3 Proportion and Conditional Probabilities of Responses of Each Latent Class, Full Sample (N=12,383)

	<b>Intense</b>	<b>Affectionate</b>	<b>Casual</b>	<b>Multi-Intense</b>	<b>Multi-Variied</b>
<b>Overall Proportion</b>	<b>.35</b>	<b>.20</b>	<b>.19</b>	<b>.13</b>	<b>.12</b>
<b>Number of Relationships</b>					
One	.91	.89	.93	.00	.00
Two	.07	.09	.05	.72	.61
Three	.01	.02	.02	.28	.39
<b>Went Out in Groups</b>					
No Relationships	.17	.15	.49	.07	.15
Some Relationships	.00	.00	.00	.33	.40
Every Relationship	.83	.84	.50	.60	.45
<b>Met Parents</b>					
No Relationships	.11	.16	.56	.05	.22
Some Relationships	.00	.00	.00	.35	.50
Every Relationship	.89	.84	.44	.59	.29
<b>Went Out Alone</b>					
No Relationships	.06	.17	.55	.02	.18
Some Relationships	.00	.00	.00	.21	.44
Every Relationship	.94	.83	.45	.77	.38
<b>Saw Less of Friends</b>					
No Relationships	.32	.46	.70	.19	.41
Some Relationships	.00	.01	.00	.45	.46
Every Relationship	.68	.54	.30	.36	.12
<b>Held Hands</b>					
No Relationships	.04	.01	.32	.01	.06
Some Relationships	.00	.00	.00	.15	.31
Every Relationship	.96	.98	.68	.84	.63
<b>Gave Partner Gift</b>					
No Relationships	.09	.06	.80	.07	.33
Some Relationships	.00	.00	.00	.42	.51
Every Relationship	.91	.94	.20	.51	.16
<b>Partner Gave Gift</b>					
No Relationships	.06	.06	.72	.04	.27
Some Relationships	.00	.00	.00	.37	.56
Every Relationship	.94	.94	.30	.59	.18
<b>Said "I Love You"</b>					
No Relationships	.03	.09	.55	.04	.26
Some Relationships	.00	.00	.00	.34	.50
Every Relationship	.97	.91	.45	.62	.24
<b>Partner Said "I Love You"</b>					
No Relationships	.02	.07	.51	.02	.20
Some Relationships	.00	.00	.00	.31	.51
Every Relationship	.98	.93	.49	.67	.29
<b>Kissed</b>					
No Relationships	.00	.06	.26	.00	.06
Some Relationships	.00	.00	.00	.04	.33
Every Relationship	1.00	.94	.74	.96	.61
<b>Touched Under Clothes</b>					
No Relationships	.01	.79	.64	.01	.39
Some Relationships	.00	.01	.00	.22	.46
Every Relationship	.99	.20	.36	.77	.14

<b>Had Sex</b>					
No Relationships	.20	.96	.83	.21	.76
Some Relationships	.00	.00	.00	.32	.19
Every Relationship	.80	.04	.17	.47	.04
<b>Genital Touching</b>					
No Relationships	.05	.97	.73	.06	.53
Some Relationships	.00	.00	.00	.30	.41
Every Relationship	.95	.03	.27	.65	.06
<b>Talked About Birth Control/STDS</b>					
No Relationships	.17	.59	.75	.12	.56
Some Relationships	.00	.01	.00	.40	.39
Every Relationship	.83	.40	.25	.48	.06
<b>Got Pregnant</b>					
No Relationships	.82	.99	.97	.77	.96
Some Relationships	.00	.00	.00	.18	.04
Every Relationship	.18	.01	.03	.06	.00

\*All standard errors in this table are < than 0.02. Standard errors not displayed for visibility purposes.



Table 4.4 Proportion and Conditional Probabilities of Responses of Each Latent Class by Age, Race, and Gender (N=12,383)

	<b>Intense</b>	<b>Affectionate</b>	<b>Casual</b>	<b>Multi-Intense</b>	<b>Multi-Varied</b>
<b>Overall Proportion</b>	<b>.35</b>	<b>.20</b>	<b>.19</b>	<b>.13</b>	<b>.12</b>
<b>Age</b>					
Young	.16	.29	.29	.08	.19
Old	.42	.17	.15	.15	.09
<b>Race</b>					
White	.34	.20	.19	.13	.14
Black	.38	.18	.21	.13	.10
Asian-American	.31	.30	.18	.11	.10
Other	.30	.22	.19	.09	.21
Latino	.35	.24	.18	.13	.11
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	.35	.21	.19	.14	.11
Female	.35	.20	.19	.12	.14

Table 4.5 Means of Adolescent Romantic Relationship Type, by Relationship Type (N=5,183)

	<i>Married</i>	<i>Cohabiting</i>	<i>Dating</i>	<i>Total Sample</i>	<i>Range</i>
Romantic Relationship Classes					
<i>Intense</i>	0.36	0.29**	0.25**	0.34	0-1
<i>Affectionate</i>	0.21	0.22	0.26	0.21	0-1
<i>Casual</i>	0.18	0.22^	0.26*	0.20	0-1
<i>Multi-Intense</i>	0.13	0.13	0.06***	0.12	0-1
<i>Multi-Varied</i>	0.12	0.15	0.17^	0.13	0-1
<b>N (total = 5,183)</b>	3,813	960	410	5,183	

Note: ^\* indicates a statistically significant difference from marriage, using a two-tailed test

^ p<0.10; \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

Table 4.6 Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Satisfaction with Young Adult Relationships (N = 5,183)

	<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>	
Adolescent Relationship Class <sup>a</sup>				
<i>Casual</i>	-0.12*	(0.05)	-0.08 <sup>^</sup>	(0.05)
<i>Intense</i>	-0.14**	(0.05)	-0.11*	(0.05)
<i>Multi-Varied</i>	-0.13*	(0.06)	-0.17**	(0.06)
<i>Multi-Intense</i>	-0.23***	(0.06)	-0.19**	(0.06)
Immigrant Generation <sup>b</sup>				
<i>Generation 1</i>			0.09	(0.09)
<i>Generation 2</i>			0.05	(0.07)
Male			0.05	(0.04)
Ethnicity <sup>c</sup>				
<i>Black</i>			-0.15**	(0.05)
<i>Asian</i>			0.03	(0.10)
<i>Native American/Other</i>			-0.09	(0.20)
<i>Latino</i>			-0.18*	(0.08)
Family Structure <sup>d</sup>				
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>			-0.07	(0.05)
<i>Single mom</i>			-0.00	(0.05)
<i>Single dad</i>			-0.08	(0.10)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>			0.03	(0.08)
Parents Attended College or More			0.04	(0.04)
Attended College or More			0.12***	(0.03)
Hardship			-0.21***	(0.02)
Previously Cohabited			-0.06	(0.19)
Previously Married			0.05	(0.04)
Age			-0.00	(0.01)
Relationship Type <sup>e</sup>				
<i>Cohabitation</i>			-0.09 <sup>^</sup>	(0.05)
<i>Dating</i>			-0.18*	(0.07)
Constant	4.01***	(0.04)	4.18***	(0.32)
<b>R2</b>		0.01		0.09

Standard Errors in Parentheses

<sup>^</sup>  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Affectionate"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

<sup>e</sup> Reference category is "Marriage"

Table 4.7 Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Partner Affection with Young Adult Relationships (N = 5,183)

	<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>	
Adolescent Relationship Class <sup>a</sup>				
<i>Casual</i>	-0.07	(0.05)	-0.04	(0.05)
<i>Intense</i>	-0.12**	(0.04)	-0.05	(0.04)
<i>Multi-Varied</i>	-0.06	(0.06)	-0.09	(0.06)
<i>Multi-Intense</i>	-0.14*	(0.06)	-0.07	(0.06)
Immigrant Generation <sup>b</sup>				
<i>Generation 1</i>			0.11	(0.08)
<i>Generation 2</i>			0.04	(0.04)
Male			0.12***	(0.03)
Ethnicity <sup>c</sup>				
<i>Black</i>			-0.13**	(0.05)
<i>Asian</i>			-0.02	(0.10)
<i>Native American/Other</i>			0.21*	(0.10)
<i>Latino</i>			-0.11	(0.07)
Family Structure <sup>d</sup>				
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>			-0.06	(0.04)
<i>Single mom</i>			-0.04	(0.04)
<i>Single dad</i>			-0.14 <sup>^</sup>	(0.08)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>			-0.01	(0.07)
Parents Attended College or More			0.09**	(0.03)
Attended College or More			0.18***	(0.03)
Hardship			-0.12***	(0.02)
Previously Cohabited			-0.11*	(0.05)
Previously Married			0.01	(0.06)
Age			-0.02*	(0.01)
Relationship Type <sup>e</sup>				
<i>Cohabitation</i>			0.05	(0.04)
<i>Dating</i>			-0.10 <sup>^</sup>	(0.05)
Constant	4.39***	(0.03)	4.91***	(0.28)
<b>R2</b>		0.00		0.07

Standard Errors in Parentheses

<sup>^</sup>  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Affectionate"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

<sup>e</sup> Reference category is "Marriage"

Table 4.8 Logistic Regression of Contentment with Young Adult Relationships (N = 5,183)

	<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>	
Adolescent Relationship Class <sup>a</sup>				
<i>Casual</i>	0.88	(0.10)	0.90	(0.11)
<i>Intense</i>	0.87	(0.10)	0.93	(0.11)
<i>Multi-Varied</i>	1.03	(0.13)	0.88	(0.11)
<i>Multi-Intense</i>	0.70**	(0.09)	0.71*	(0.10)
Immigrant Generation <sup>b</sup>				
<i>Generation 1</i>			1.26	(0.28)
<i>Generation 2</i>			0.99	(0.14)
Male			0.76**	(0.06)
Ethnicity <sup>c</sup>				
<i>Black</i>			0.62***	(0.06)
<i>Asian</i>			0.97	(0.23)
<i>Native American/Other</i>			1.70	(0.75)
<i>Latino</i>			0.71*	(0.09)
Family Structure <sup>d</sup>				
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>			0.80^	(0.09)
<i>Single mom</i>			0.85	(0.10)
<i>Single dad</i>			0.95	(0.21)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>			0.81	(0.11)
Parents Attended College or More			1.15	(0.10)
Attended College or More			1.56***	(0.15)
Hardship			0.81***	(0.03)
Previously Cohabited			0.93	(0.092)
Previously Married			1.16	(0.38)
Age			0.95	(0.02)
Relationship Type <sup>e</sup>				
<i>Cohabitation</i>			0.70**	(0.08)
<i>Dating</i>			0.32***	(0.05)
<b>F</b>		2.39		11.74

Odds Ratios Presented; Standard Errors in Parentheses

<sup>^</sup>  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Affectionate"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

<sup>e</sup> Reference category is "Marriage"

Table 4.9 Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Satisfaction with Sex with Young Adult Relationships  
(N = 5,183)

	<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>	
Adolescent Relationship Class <sup>a</sup>				
<i>Casual</i>	-0.04	(0.06)	-0.04	(0.06)
<i>Intense</i>	-0.12*	(0.06)	-0.09	(0.06)
<i>Multi-Varied</i>	-0.21*	(0.08)	-0.21*	(0.09)
<i>Multi-Intense</i>	-0.22**	(0.08)	-0.18*	(0.09)
Immigrant Generation <sup>b</sup>				
<i>Generation 1</i>			0.05	(0.10)
<i>Generation 2</i>			0.02	(0.07)
Male			-0.02	(0.04)
Ethnicity <sup>c</sup>				
<i>Black</i>			0.04	(0.05)
<i>Asian</i>			0.03	(0.16)
<i>Native American/Other</i>			-0.25	(0.26)
<i>Latino</i>			-0.02	(0.09)
Family Structure <sup>d</sup>				
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>			-0.02	(0.06)
<i>Single mom</i>			-0.05	(0.06)
<i>Single dad</i>			-0.04	(0.10)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>			0.16	(0.07)
Parents Attended College or More			0.03	(0.04)
Attended College or More			-0.09*	(0.04)
Hardship			-0.06**	(0.02)
Previously Cohabited			-0.10*	(0.05)
Previously Married			0.34*	(0.13)
Age			-0.02 <sup>^</sup>	(0.01)
Relationship Type <sup>e</sup>				
<i>Cohabitation</i>			0.05	(0.06)
<i>Dating</i>			0.03	(0.07)
Constant	4.13***	(0.05)	4.88***	(0.39)
<b>R2</b>		0.01		0.02

Standard Errors in Parentheses

<sup>^</sup>  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Affectionate"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

<sup>e</sup> Reference category is "Marriage"

Table 4.10 Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Overall Quality with Young Adult Relationships (N = 5,183)

	<b>Model 1</b>		<b>Model 2</b>	
Adolescent Relationship Class <sup>a</sup>				
<i>Casual</i>	-0.06	(0.04)	-0.04	(0.04)
<i>Intense</i>	-0.09**	(0.03)	-0.05	(0.04)
<i>Multi-Varied</i>	-0.07	(0.05)	-0.10 <sup>^</sup>	(0.05)
<i>Multi-Intense</i>	-0.15***	(0.05)	-0.11*	(0.05)
Immigrant Generation <sup>b</sup>				
<i>Generation 1</i>			0.08	(0.06)
<i>Generation 2</i>			0.02	(0.04)
Male			0.00	(0.05)
Ethnicity <sup>c</sup>				
<i>Black</i>			-0.12***	(0.03)
<i>Asian</i>			0.02	(0.08)
<i>Native American/Other</i>			0.02	(0.11)
<i>Latino</i>			-0.11 <sup>^</sup>	(0.06)
Family Structure <sup>d</sup>				
<i>1 step-parent + 1 biological parent</i>			-0.04	(0.03)
<i>Single mom</i>			-0.02	(0.04)
<i>Single dad</i>			-0.08	(0.07)
<i>2 step-parents or other</i>			0.03	(0.05)
Parents Attended College or More			0.05*	(0.02)
Attended College or More			0.10***	(0.02)
Hardship			-0.12***	(0.01)
Previously Cohabited			-0.10*	(0.04)
Previously Married			0.07	(0.11)
Age			-0.01	(0.01)
Relationship Type <sup>e</sup>				
<i>Cohabitation</i>			0.00	(0.03)
<i>Dating</i>			-0.21***	(0.04)
Constant	3.98***	(0.02)	4.37***	(0.24)
<b>R2</b>		0.00		0.07

Standard Errors in Parentheses

<sup>^</sup>  $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Reference category is "Affectionate"

<sup>b</sup> Reference category is "Generation 3"

<sup>c</sup> Reference category is "White"

<sup>d</sup> Reference category is "2 Biological or Adoptive Parents"

<sup>e</sup> Reference category is "Marriage"

Table 5.1 Summary of Findings

	<b>Relationship Quality</b>
<b>Socialization</b>	
<i>Parent-Child Relationships</i>	+
<i>Parent Romantic Relationships</i>	+
<i>Affectionate Teen Relationships</i>	+
<i>Multiple Teen Relationships</i>	-
<b>Personality</b>	
<i>Neuroticism</i>	-
<b>Cultural Factors</b>	
<i>Black (compared to White)</i>	-
<i>Immigrant Status</i>	NS
<b>Demographic Factors</b>	
<i>SES</i>	+
<i>Dating</i>	-
<i>Marriage</i>	+



## APPENDIX A

P-Values of Significance Tests for Generational Interactions

<b>Dependent Variables</b>	<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Satisfaction with Sex</b>	<b>Partner Affection</b>	<b>Contentment</b>	<b>Parental Contentment</b>	<b>Parental Stress</b>
<i>Interactions with Generation</i>						
Race/Ethnicity	0.99	0.93	0.42	0.99	0.91	1.00
Relationship Type	0.99	1.00	1.00	0.99	0.68	0.83

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