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GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN COHABITATION AND MARRIAGE IN THE U.S.*

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ABSTRACT

We use data from pooled 2000-2004 Current Population Surveys to examine generational

differences in cohabitation and marriage among men and women ages 18-49 in the U.S.

Consistent with our expectation and in line with assimilation theory, levels of

cohabitation rise across succeeding generations. In contrast, generational differences in

marriage follow a curvilinear pattern such that those in the second generation are least

likely to be married, which supports some contemporary extensions of assimilation

theory. These patterns persist across age and education groups, and tend to hold across

race/ethnic groups, too, although among women, the predicted percentages cohabiting

across generations vary widely by race/ethnicity.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN COHABITATION AND MARRIAGE IN THE U.S.

Unmarried cohabitation has increased dramatically over the past three decades, climbing from 500,000 couples in 1970 to nearly 5 million couples in 2000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001a). This growth has altered the family life course, with cohabitation now a normative event prior to marriage as well as following marital dissolution (Bumpass, Raley, and Sweet, 1995; Bumpass, Sweet, and Cherlin, 1991). Increasingly, cohabitation is a setting for child bearing and rearing, as 40 percent of American children are expected to spend some time in a cohabiting family prior to age 16 (Bumpass and Lu, 2000). There are large race/ethnic differences in cohabitation, with Blacks and Hispanics more likely to cohabit than Whites.

Yet, apart from Landale and colleagues' work on Puerto Rican migrants (e.g., Landale and Fennelly, 1992; Landale and Forste, 1991), studies of *immigrants*' cohabitation experiences are conspicuously absent. This omission is consequential not only because immigrants comprise a growing share of the U.S. population, but also because they are socioeconomically disadvantaged, which presumably places them at greater risk for experiencing cohabitation. Further, many race/ethnic groups in the U.S. include large portions of immigrants. If the cohabitation experiences of immigrants are much different from natives, then what may appear to be race/ethnic differences in cohabitation may in fact be differences due to immigration. Just as patterns of marriage, divorce and fertility vary among natives and immigrants across racial and ethnic groups, we suggest cohabitation patterns may also vary considerably.

The absence of research on immigrant cohabitation patterns may result from a paucity of available data. Even large data sets, such as the Survey of Income and

Program Participation, do not contain a sufficient number of immigrant cohabitors to support an analysis of union formation (authors' calculation; available on request). Thus, the present study provides a descriptive portrait of immigrant cohabitation. Using pooled data from the 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 Current Population Surveys, we examine whether and how levels of cohabitation and marriage vary by generational status for men and women, net of relevant sociodemographic characteristics. To formulate our expectations regarding the role of generational status, we draw on research on race/ethnic variation in cohabitation and marriage, highlighting the roles of socioeconomic status and culture. Our hypotheses are also informed by theory and research on immigrant nuptiality patterns (e.g., Arias, 2001; Gordon, 1964).

BACKGROUND

Race/Ethnic Variation

Our understanding of the complexity of variation in cohabitation by race/ethnicity is largely informed by comparisons of Blacks and Whites and, more recently, for some Hispanics as well (Manning and Landale, 1996; Manning and Smock, 1995; Raley, 1996; Smock, 2000). Unfortunately, to our knowledge, there are no studies available of other race/ethnic groups in the U.S., particularly those with large proportions of immigrants and second generation adults (e.g., Asians). Nevertheless, the prevalence of cohabitation varies considerably across race/ethnic groups such that cohabitation is especially common among disadvantaged minority groups, including Blacks and Hispanics (Bumpass and Lu, 2000). Additionally, the purposes and motivations for cohabitation also vary by race/ethnicity. Cohabiting unions appear more similar to marriage among Blacks and Hispanics than Whites. Blacks are as likely as Whites to form unions, but are

substantially less likely to form marital unions. Instead, Blacks often form cohabiting unions (Raley, 1996). In turn, these cohabiting unions are unlikely to be formalized through marriage among Blacks, even among those who report plans to marry their partner. The most likely outcome is actually remaining together in a cohabiting relationship (Brown, 2000). Unlike their White counterparts, Black and Hispanic cohabitors are less likely to marry in response to a pregnancy (Manning, 2004). And, more Black and Hispanic children will spend greater proportions of their childhoods in cohabiting families than White children (Bumpass and Lu, 2000). Taken together, these findings suggest that cohabitation is less often a stepping stone to marriage than a substitute for it among Blacks and Hispanics when compared to Whites.

Similarly, cohabitation appears to operate as a substitute for marriage among Puerto Ricans. Landale and Forste (1991) found that unions are as likely to begin through cohabitation as marriage among young mainland Puerto Rican women. Importantly, unions that begin informally are unlikely to be formalized through marriage. Moreover, such unions typically involve childbearing. Cohabiting Puerto Rican women tend to be more similar to their married than single counterparts in terms of education, employment, and childbearing (Landale and Fennelly, 1992). Indeed, when asked, most Puerto Rican women characterized their cohabiting relationships as a form of marriage.

Immigrants are much more likely to be Hispanic or Asian than are natives. Among immigrants ages 20 to 39, the majority (56.1%) is Hispanic, 21.1% are Asian, and only 15% are non-Hispanic White. For natives, only 9.6% and 2.0% are Hispanic and Asian, respectively, and the majority (72.4%) are non-Hispanic White (authors'

analysis of the 2005 March CPS). Because racial and ethnic minorities have been found

to have higher levels of cohabitation, immigrants may also be more likely to cohabit.

Socioeconomic Status

Historically, cohabitation has been most common among those at the lowest

socioeconomic strata in the United States and other countries as well. Although

cohabitation has become increasingly prevalent across other groups, it continues to be a

trend driven by those with fewer economic resources. According to Landale and Forste

(1991), cohabitation serves as an adaptive family formation strategy for the

disadvantaged by allowing union formation despite economic uncertainty. This notion is

consistent with recent ethnographic work by Smock, Manning, and Porter (2005) that

shows many cohabitors describe marriage as unattainable primarily because they lack the

economic stability they consider a prerequisite for marriage.

Cohabitation offers many of the benefits of marriage, including intimacy, shared

residence, and child bearing and rearing, without the conventional expectations of male

economic provision associated with marriage (Landale and Forste, 1991). For these

reasons, cohabitation is especially common among those with lower levels of education

as well as those currently in school. The completion of the male partner's schooling is

positively associated with marriage entry among cohabitors (Oppenheimer, 2003).

Similarly, cohabiting men's economic characteristics, including education and earnings,

are related to marriage, but women's are not (Smock and Manning, 1997).

As a group, immigrants have lower levels of education and earnings than natives

(Martin and Midgley, 1999; Bean and Stevens, 2003). Although immigrants and natives

are equally likely to have a college degree (26% in 2000), fewer immigrants completed

high school. Thirty-three percent of the foreign born age 25 and older had not completed high school compared with only 13.4% of natives (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001b). In addition, immigrants are more concentrated in lower-paying jobs than natives within their ethnic groups (Waldinger, 2001). Even after adjusting for nativity differences in educational attainment, fully employed foreign-born workers earn less than natives. Asian immigrants tend to earn more than Latino immigrants, but still fall short of natives (Bean and Stevens, 2003). The disadvantaged economic circumstances faced by immigrants as a whole portend high levels of cohabitation.

Culture

Immigrants represent diverse cultures. In many of these cultures, consensual unions have a long history. For instance, consensual unions have been quite common in many areas of Latin America and are not only a setting for child bearing and rearing but are also recognized by the state as a form of marital union (see Landale and Fennelly, 1992 for a summary). These consensual unions are usually associated with lower levels of education. A recent analysis of consensual unions in nine Latin American countries suggests these relationships are relatively stable and likely to occur across the life course (Castro Martin, 2002).

The long-term "traditional" consensual unions that serve as a substitute for formal marriage in many rural and lower income areas in Latin America appear to be quite different from the "modern" cohabitation associated with women's economic independence. Just as we find variation in the socioeconomic profiles of cohabitors in the United States (with higher rates among those with lower levels of education but increasing cohabitation among those with higher education for whom cohabitation serves

as a stepping stone to marriage), such variation is increasingly evident in other countries as they experience modernization. For instance, a study of two cohorts of women in Venezuela finds modern consensual unions more prevalent among younger, educated women in urban areas. These modern unions are less stable and result in lower fertility than the traditional unions experienced by less educated women in rural areas (Parrado and Tienda, 1997).

<div align="center">THE PRESENT STUDY</div>

We examine patterns of union type (marriage and cohabitation) by race/ethnicity and generation status. We form several hypotheses based on the expectations of diverging patterns for race/ethnic groups and converging patterns across generation status. We anticipate that, consistent with assimilation theory, there will be a positive association between generation and cohabitation across all groups. However, our expectations about the prevalence of cohabitation vary across race/ethnic groups. Theories of immigrant adaptation and assimilation would suggest that more recent migrants adhere to traditions from their country of origin. Thus, we may expect higher levels of cohabitation among some Latin American migrants with much lower levels among other non-Latin American and non-European migrants. Asian immigrants in particular should be less likely to cohabit than their U. S. born counterparts because there is no history of consensual unions in most Asian-origin countries.

As evidenced in Parrado and Tienda's (1997) study of Venezuelan women, education and generational status may interact in their effects on cohabitation such that the negative association between education and cohabitation will increase across the generations. In particular, we expect that immigrants with low education will have

relatively high levels of cohabitation because we will be observing the more stable

traditional unions similar to the consensual unions from Latin America. On the other

hand, because the modern form of cohabitation is relatively common among Latin

American women with higher education, we expect immigrants with higher levels of

education to have similar levels of cohabitation as their native-born counterparts. This

expectation is consistent with the notion that immigrants at higher levels of education are

more structurally incorporated when they arrive and more quickly fit into the

"mainstream" U.S. social structure that considers cohabitation normative family

formation behavior. Thus the relationship between education and cohabitation is

expected to be flat or even negative for the first generation. However, we expect

cohabitation levels to increase—primarily among those with less education—with

increasing generations and time in the U.S. as immigrants assimilate to the dominant

family formation patterns in the U.S.

Turning to marriage, we predict a curvilinear relationship between generation and

marital status, with higher percentages married in the first and third generation, and lower

percentages in the second generation. We base our expectations on research on the

interplay of structural incorporation and acculturation (i.e., cultural assimilation) among

immigrants and their children and grandchildren (e.g., Bean, Berg, and Van Hook, 1997),

as well as Arias' (2001) application of Gordon's (1964) ideas on the nuptiality patterns of

Cuban immigrants. Structural incorporation is the process by which immigrants' position

in the social and economic structure of the host country (often measured by educational

attainment, income, and occupational status) changes with time and generations in the

host country, and acculturation is the process in which immigrants appropriate or

converge with the values and norms of the "mainstream" society. Gordon (1964) and more contemporary scholars (e.g., Alba and Nee, 2003) emphasize that socioeconomic assimilation and acculturation need not occur simultaneously, and that neither structural incorporation nor assimilation is inevitable (Alba and Nee, 2003). For example, Zhou and Bankston (1998) document a pattern of ethnic resilience among the Vietnamese in Louisiana, in which the U.S. born children of immigrants (the second generation) were highly successful in school and on the path toward rapid socioeconomic upward mobility (i.e., exhibiting evidence of structural incorporation), yet remained bounded by the norms and social expectations of their parents' generation (i.e., not yet exhibiting high levels of acculturation).

Because first generation immigrants (the foreign born) are likely to be the least structurally and culturally assimilated, we expect that immigrants will exhibit high levels of marriage, particularly if they originate from countries without a history of consensual unions. Immigrants—especially those with less experience in the host society and fewer economic resources—are thought to use kinship networks and marriage (both formal and informal forms of marriage) to ease the transition into the host society (Boyd, 1989; Bean, Berg, and Van Hook, 1997; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993; Portes, 1998) and buffer themselves and their children from those aspects of American society they perceive as harmful (Zhou and Bankston, 1998). Resources derived through kinship networks and marital relationships may substitute for deprivations in education, English language proficiency, U. S. labor market experience, and neighborhood and school quality. The percentage married is therefore expected to be relatively high in the first generation, especially among those with low levels of education). In addition to

education, we expect to see variations by gender. Prior research suggests that women are more likely to come to the U.S. as a "tied" immigrant, that is, following a husband, partner, or father, rather than primary immigrants who come to the U. S. on their own (Donato, 1993; Donato and Patterson, 2004; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Cerrutti and Massey, 2001). We therefore expect to see higher levels of marriage among immigrant women than immigrant men, although we note that the tendency for women to arrive as "tied" migrants accompanying or following a husband or father has been observed primarily among Mexicans and is likely to vary considerably by national origin and education (Donato, 1993; Donato and Patterson, 2004; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Pessar, 1999).

Since the second generation is likely to be more structurally assimilated than the first generation, but may not be completely acculturated, we expect that levels of marriage would decline in the second generation relative to the first generation. Among the children of immigrants who arrived as young children or who were born in the U. S., education opens up pathways to economic mobility and security. Second generation women and women who arrived in the U. S. as young children may therefore delay marriage in lieu of pursuing higher education and, once married, may be more likely to divorce as the means for supporting themselves through employment increase. This is similar to patterns of low fertility observed among second generation women who pursue higher education (Espenshade and Ye, 1994).

Marriage market constraints might also contribute to delayed marriage among the second generation. The children of immigrants (second generation and those arriving as young children) may be less likely to marry than either the first or third generations due

to difficulty finding partners that are considered acceptable by both themselves and their extended family. Children of immigrants may prefer to marry co-ethnics because they retain many of the nuptiality norms of their parents or, perhaps, feel pressure from their parents to marry within the group (Zhou and Bankston, 1998). Yet as an upwardly mobile group, the children of immigrants are less likely than the first generation to come into contact with co-ethnics and more likely to develop intimate relationships with those outside their ethnic group. This would place the children of immigrants, especially those experiencing upward mobility (i.e., with higher levels of education), in relatively poor marriage markets and lead to lower rates of marriage. However, because intermarriage becomes more normative and the pool of acceptable marriage partners increases with generation, marriage rates are likely to be higher in the third than the second generation.

In sum, we anticipate that cohabitation will increase across generations, consistent with assimilation theory. In contrast, we expect generational status and marriage to exhibit a curvilinear relationship such that those in the second generation will be least likely to be married. Union formation processes differ for men and women and thus we estimate models separately by gender after testing whether gender and generation interact. To evaluate potential generational differences in the timing of cohabitation and marriage, we estimate models that include interaction terms for generation and age. We also test for an interaction between generation and education to evaluate the ideas outlined above concerning the moderating influence of education on the effects of generation. Since cohabitation is more common and therefore more normative among some race/ethnic groups than others, we examine whether generation and race/ethnicity interact in their effects on cohabitation.

DATA

Using data from the combined 2000-2004 March Current Population Surveys (CPSs), we document the prevalence of cohabitation, marriage, and unions for men and women by generational status. The March CPS follows housing units over time for up to 16 months; approximately half of the sample in the March CPS for one year is eligible to be followed up in the following years' March CPS. To remove duplicate cases, we restrict our sample to those in their first March interview. Because there were too few to analyze in a meaningful way, we excluded from our sample those identifying as American Indian or "other" race/ethnicity. Finally, we restrict our focus to adults of prime union formation ages, 18-49, yielding an analytic sample size of 626,668.

Measures

Union status is captured using three dummy variables to distinguish among respondents who are cohabiting, married, or unpartnered. Cohabitation status is based on a direct question about the relationship of individuals to the householder whereby a cohabiting partner is referred to as an "unmarried partner." Those identified as an "unmarried partner" and householders living with unmarried partners are coded as cohabitors.

Generational status refers to the number of generations a person's family has been in the United States. First generation individuals are defined as foreign-born persons of foreign-born parents. We distinguish between those who arrived as adults at ages 18 or older and those who arrived as children ages 17 or younger to evaluate whether union patterns are distinct for these two groups. Immigrants who enter as children or young adolescents will be socialized in dating and courtship patterns in the United States. Likewise, those who spend the majority of their formative years in their

countries of origin will have less exposure to early union formation behavior in the United States. Further, immigrants who arrive in adulthood are more likely to have formed unions in their country of origin and are thus more likely influenced by the marriage markets and union formation traditions of the country of origin. Thus, we may expect those who arrived in the United States when they were age 17 or younger to have patterns more similar to or just in between immigrants arriving as adults and the second generation. Second generation are U.S. born persons of foreign-born parents, and the remaining are third-or-higher generation individuals. Generational status is dummy coded: generation one 18+, generation one 0-17, generation two, and generation three (reference).

Our analyses control for several sociodemographic characteristics related to union status. *Gender* is coded 1 for men and 0 for women. *Age* is measured in years, centered around the mean. *Race/ethnicity* distinguishes among the following groups: Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Other Hispanic, and Non-Hispanic White (reference). Unfortunately, the sample sizes are too small to divide Asians by country of origin, but we acknowledge the distinct linguistic, economic, and cultural backgrounds of immigrants in this group. Puerto Ricans, though not technically immigrants but subject to many of the same conditions (i.e. speaking a non-English language in the place of origin, moving to limited marriage markets), are examined separately from other Hispanics. *Children* measures the number of minor resident children in the household and is dummy coded into the following categories: one child, two children, three or more children, and no children (reference). *Education* is coded in years and ranges from 0 to 20 (e.g., high school diploma = 12; Associate degree = 14; B.A. = 16; M.A. = 18; PhD or

professional degree = 20). For the multivariate analyses, e*ducation* is centered around the mean (years of education = 13). *Employment* is derived from the respondent's report of his/her current labor force activity, and is categorized as full-time (reference), part-time, unemployed, and not in the labor force. The CPS provides *income-to-poverty ratios*, which we code as <100% poverty, 100-124% poverty, 125-149%, and 150+% (reference). The means of all measures by gender and generation are shown in Appendix Table 1.

Analytic Strategy

We begin by documenting the prevalence of unions (i.e., cohabitation or marriage), marriage, and cohabitation separately for men and women by generational status. Next, we estimate multinomial logistic regressions predicting cohabitation versus marriage, controlling for generation, gender, age, race/ethnicity, children, education, employment, and income-to-poverty ratios, to estimate predicted percentages cohabiting and married. We test whether generation and gender interact in their effects on union type, since union processes are likely to differ for men and women. We also examine the interactive effects of generation and age to decipher the timing of union formation and whether it varies by generational status. Then we investigate whether there is a significant interaction between generation and education such that the negative effect of education attenuates across generations, as suggested by prior research. Finally, we consider whether generational differences in cohabitation and marriage are modified by race/ethnicity since norms about the acceptability of cohabitation may vary across race/ethnic groups.

RESULTS

Descriptive Results

As shown in Table 1, there is a curvilinear pattern of the proportion in a union across generational status such that those in the second generation are least likely to be in a coresidential partnership or marriage. Among men, 57% and 56% of the first and third generations, respectively, are in a union, compared to just 44% of the second generation. The generational differences for women are similar: 66%, 50%, and 59% of the first, second, and third generations, respectively, are in a union. Notably, first generation men and women who arrived as children are less likely to be in a union than those who arrived as adults but more likely than those in the second generation.

The percentage married or cohabiting follows distinct patterns. For marriage, the pattern is analogous to that observed for unions; second generation members are least likely to be married. In contrast, cohabitation exhibits a linear increase, supporting the assimilation hypothesis posed earlier. Whereas about 4% of first generation men and women are cohabiting, roughly 5.5% of the second generation and close to 6% of the third generation are in cohabiting unions. Restricting our focus only to those currently in a union reveals the same pattern; cohabitation levels are higher for each successive generation.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Table 2 shows the percentages married, cohabiting, and cohabiting among those in a union by generational status and race/ethnic group separately for men and women. Supporting our hypotheses, the relationship between generational status and marriage is curvilinear such that the proportion married is lowest among the second generation. This

curvilinear relationship is evident for all race/ethnic groups among both men and women, except for Non-Hispanic Whites for whom essentially the same proportions of those in the first generation ages 0-17 and the second generation are married. However, for both men and women, generational status is positively related to cohabitation. Across most race/ethnic groups, we observe patterns consistent with assimilation. Distinguishing between the two types of first generation immigrants though does not yield the expected results among men as for all race/ethnic groups. Except for Asians, the proportions cohabiting are actually a bit higher among first generation immigrants who arrived as adults than those who arrived as children. Restricting our focus to only those who are in unions (shown in the third column), the proportions cohabiting (versus married) follow the expected assimilation pattern for both men and women in most race/ethnic groups. A notable exception concerns the small declines in the proportions cohabiting between second and third generations among Non-Hispanic White and Black men and women as well as Puerto Rican and Other Hispanic women.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Perhaps the most striking finding though is that third generation Asians exhibit the highest levels of cohabitation among women. Whereas less than 6% of Non-Hispanic White and Black third generation women are cohabiting, over 9% of third generation Asian women report living with an unmarried partner. We do not have a compelling explanation for this finding, but note that prior studies on race/ethnic differences in cohabitation have been confined to comparisons among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics. We know essentially nothing about cohabitation among Asians, let alone generational differences in cohabitation among Asians. The percentages cohabiting among Asian men

are roughly only half as large as those for Asian women, and are considerably lower than those for either White or Black men. It is possible that these patterns we find for cohabitation reflect the distinct gender patterns of intermarriage among Asians. Third generation Asians are more likely to intermarry or interpartner with Whites than their foreign born counterparts (Qian, Blair, and Ruf, 2001). And, although intermarriage varies considerably by country of origin, several groups with high intermarriage rates contribute to the "Asian" subgroup (i.e., Filipinas have considerably higher levels of intermarriage than their male counterparts). Perhaps second generation Asian women also cohabit rather than marry their partners from outside their own ethnic group. Although these are speculative conclusions at this point, the results clearly suggest a very different process at work among men and women.

Multivariate Results

Initial analyses (not shown, available from authors by request) reveal that gender and generation interact in their effects on union type. Thus, all multivariate models are estimated separately for men and women. Figure 1 demonstrates the importance of distinguishing between marriage and cohabitation and is derived from Table 3. As shown in the first panel of Figure 1, which graphs the predicted percentage married, we observe a curvilinear pattern such that the second generation is least likely to be married, and the generational differences in marriage are larger among women than men. For cohabitation (panel 2), there is strong evidence of assimilation among men such that their cohabitation levels increase linearly with generation. Among women, levels of cohabitation follow the same pattern as marriage (a u-shaped pattern with generational status). This result makes sense given prior research showing that Mexican-origin women are more likely

than men to arrive in the U.S. as secondary or "tied" migrants (following or accompanying their husband, partner, or father) rather than primary migrants who come to the U.S. on their own (Donato, 1993; Donato and Patterson, 2004; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Cerrutti and Massey, 2001). Indeed, the pattern observed in Figure 1 for all groups together is likely to be heavily weighted toward the Mexican pattern since Mexicans comprise by far the largest immigrant group.

The predicted percentages among those in a union that are expected to be cohabiting reveal the assimilation pattern for women, as shown in panel 3. This pattern was not initially evident because relatively few second generation women are either married or cohabiting. But among those in unions, cohabitation levels rise with generation for women just as they do for men.

[TABLE 3 AND FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Next, we examine the interaction between generation and age separately for men and women. As shown in Figure 2 derived from Appendix Table 2, among men, the predicted proportion married varies little by generation. In contrast, first generation women who arrived as adults are much more likely to be married at younger ages (i.e., under 30 years old) than their counterparts in other generations. This finding is consistent with other work noted above showing that women tend to come to the U.S. as secondary rather than primary migrants.

Whereas the predicted proportions married increases with age for men and women alike, the association between cohabitation and age is curvilinear such that decreasing proportions of men and women are estimated to be cohabiting after age 35. Among men, the proportions cohabiting are significantly higher in the second and third

generations than the first (although by age 40, first generation men who arrived as minors are as likely to be cohabiting as the second and third generations). Women exhibit a distinct pattern. The predicted proportions cohabiting among first generation women who arrived as adults varies little by age, but among other generational groups, the predicted proportions increase until age 30 or so. Those in the first generation who arrived as children show a relatively steep decline in the proportions cohabiting after age 30. Finally, the third panel of the figure reveals that generational differences in the proportions cohabiting among those in a union are wide at young ages and converge by age 40 as the second and third generations experience declines in the proportions cohabiting. Significantly higher proportions in the second and third generations are cohabiting (among those in unions) at younger ages, which is consistent with our expectations. Thus the greatest generational differences in cohabitation are observed for young adults, and diminish considerably at older ages.

We consider whether generation and education interact in their effects on the likelihood of being married or cohabiting and depict our findings in Figure 3. The generation and education interaction terms are statistically significant, as shown in Appendix Table 3. Among men, the predicted proportions married vary little by generational status but do tend to exhibit a modest positive association with education. Those in the first generation who arrived as adults are most likely to be married, regardless of education. Unlike other groups, the first generation who arrived as children actually appear to be slightly less likely to be married at higher (versus lower) levels of education. Among women, the first generation who arrived as adults are most likely to be married, regardless of education. Those who arrived as children are also more likely

to be married than other groups, but only at lower levels of education as expected. The second generation is least likely to married regardless of education. We had expected that the second generation may be investing in human capital and thus we would see relatively low levels of marriage especially among those with higher levels of education. This expectation is partially borne out in the results for women. Although the distribution is essentially flat (regardless of education, second generation women are unlikely to be married), the difference in the predicted proportion married between the second and third-or-higher generation, and between immigrants arriving as adults and those arriving as children, is greatest at higher levels of education.

We hypothesized that the effects of education and generation on cohabitation would interact such that the negative effects of education would strengthen across generations and that generational differences in cohabitation would converge at higher levels of education. Our hypothesis is more clearly supported in the case of women than men. Among men, the effects of education on cohabitation appear to be similar for all generational groups and cohabitation levels increase from the first to the second and third generations regardless of education level. Among women, cohabitation levels increase somewhat between the first and second generations (especially among those in unions), but are not sensitive to education. Among the third generation, cohabitation is most common and, as expected, is negatively associated with education. Thus in contrast to natives (i.e., the third generation), cohabitation is not as clearly associated with educational disadvantage among immigrants. Moreover, the graphs of the predicted percentages cohabiting for both men and women show that generational differences in cohabitation are smallest at the highest level of education, consistent with our hypothesis.

This pattern is most apparent for women in the third panel, which depicts the predicted percentage cohabiting by education and generation among women in unions.

[FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Finally, we examined the predicted proportions married and cohabiting across race/ethnic groups, which are depicted in Figure 4. As expected race/ethnicity and generation interact in their effects on union type (see Appendix Table 4). The first panel depicts race/ethnic variation in marriage, showing a slight curvilinear association with generation for men. For all groups except Mexicans, a larger proportion of first generation men who arrived as adults are expected to be married than those who arrived as children. Among women, the association between generational status and marriage is also curvilinear such that those in the second generation are least likely to be married.

The second panel shows the predicted proportions cohabiting. For both men and women, a U-shaped pattern across generations—similar to that seen in the case of marriage—appears for several race/ethnic groups. To isolate the patterns in cohabitation from those of unions, we focus on the predicted proportion cohabiting among those in a union, shown in the third panel. Among both men and women, the evidence is consistent with the assimilation hypothesis for most groups in that cohabitation levels among those in unions increase across generations. This pattern is most clearly seen for Asians, among who predicted cohabitation levels are particularly low in the first generation but increase in a step-wise fashion with increasing time and generations in the U.S. Among Asian women, cohabitation is exceptionally high among the third generation, a result that warrants further investigation. Nevertheless, the exceptionally low levels of cohabitation among first generation Asians are not unexpected as this group originates from regions of

the world where cohabitation and consensual unions have been uncommon. This classic assimilation pattern is less apparent in the case of Hispanics, among whom cohabitation levels in the first generation tend to be quite similar to the second and (sometimes) the third generations. Again, the relatively high levels of cohabitation for Hispanics are not unexpected because Hispanics tend to originate from regions of the world where consensual unions are more common.

[FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]

DISCUSSION

The past few decades have witnessed a substantial increase in the immigrant population as well as a growing prevalence of cohabitation. Additionally, cohabitation varies considerably by race/ethnic group and is especially common among those with fewer socioeconomic resources, including Blacks and Hispanics. Despite these trends and in spite of the evidence of race/ethnic variation, the cohabitation experiences of immigrants have not been extensively investigated (although Landale and colleagues have studied cohabitation among Puerto Ricans).

Using data from the combined 2000-2004 CPSs, we document unique associations between generational status, cohabitation, and marriage among men and women in the U.S. Consistent with contemporary assimilation theory, levels of cohabitation increase across generations, and marriage levels exhibit a curvilinear U-shape as marriage is least common among the second generation. These patterns are evident among both men and women although they are more pronounced among the latter. We offer speculative interpretations of these patterns in lieu of more detailed information and data. Second generation adults may delay or avoid marriage but they are

not necessarily opting out of residential unions. Rather, these adult children of immigrants are more likely to cohabit than their foreign born peers. Second generation adults may choose partners who are of different ethnic or cultural origins and choose to cohabit rather than enter a mixed marriage. Or, the cohabiting second generation adults may be on the road to marriage with their partners as they accrue greater stores of human capital via higher education or employment.

The generational patterns in marriage and cohabitation described above obtain across age and education groups, but are less consistent across race/ethnic groups. The classic assimilation pattern of increasing levels of cohabitation with time and generations in the U. S. is most clear for Asians and least clear in the case of Hispanics. This is consistent with our expectations. Because cohabitation and consensual unions are relatively uncommon in Asian countries, it is possible that immigrants originating from Asia carry these norms with them when they come to the U. S. and are unlikely to cohabit. But cohabitation levels increase over time and generations in the United States (albeit to exceptionally high levels for Asian women as we discuss further below). In contrast, consensual unions are more common in Latin America. As a result, Hispanic immigrants may cohabit nearly as much as the second generation and (for Puerto Rican women) the third-or-higher generation, so the classic assimilation pattern does not appear. We caution that the relatively flat generational pattern for Hispanics does not necessarily mean that Hispanics do not acculturate. The meaning of cohabitation for Hispanics may change across generations even if the levels of cohabitation do not.

In addition to documenting generational differences in marriage and cohabitation this study makes an important contribution by investigating cohabitation among Asians.

We find exceptionally high levels of cohabitation among third-or-higher generation Asian women in both our actual weighted percentages and in our predicted percentages based on multivariate models that control for sociodemographic factors associated with union status and type. We are not aware of any cohabitation research that includes Asians and thus we cannot be too quick to dismiss our seemingly counterintuitive finding as there is no comparison benchmark. Nonetheless, this result needs to be replicated with other data because it is odd, particularly since there is no history of consensual unions in Asia. Based on assimilation theory, we would have expected Asians (even in the third generation) to have lower levels of cohabitation than Whites and Hispanics, for instance, but that is not what we found.

Our study does have some limitations. As noted at the outset, the analyses we performed are descriptive, primarily because adequate data are not available to examine the processes involved in union formation and maintenance among various immigrant groups. Moreover, to the extent that formalizations of cohabitation through marriage differ by generation or race/ethnicity, we may be underestimating cohabitation for certain groups as we rely on cross-sectional data. Data constraints also necessitate the use of broad race/ethnic categories such as lumping together all Asian and Pacific Islanders, even though we expect there is valuable information to be gained from the sub-groups comprising this category.

Nonetheless, this study extends prior research on race/ethnic differences in cohabitation by incorporating generation. At the same time, it contributes to research on immigrant nuptiality by distinguishing between marriage and cohabitation. Generational

status operates differently for cohabitation and marriages, meaning that analyses of

unions mask important variation by union type.

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Table 1

Percentage in a Union, Married, or Cohabiting by Sex and Generational Status

	Union	Married	Cohabiting	Cohabiting Among Those in Union
Men				
1st Generation	57.0	53.1	3.9	6.9
Arrived Age 18+	63.0	59.2	3.8	6.1
Arrived Age 0-17	47.8	43.7	4.1	8.6
2nd Generation	43.8	38.5	5.4	12.2
3rd+ Generation	55.9	50.0	5.9	10.5
Women				
1st Generation	65.9	61.8	4.1	6.2
Arrived Age 18+	72.9	69.3	3.6	4.9
Arrived Age 0-17	54.0	49.1	4.9	9.1
2nd Generation	49.9	44.2	5.6	11.3
3rd+ Generation	58.7	52.8	5.8	9.9

Source: 2000-2004 March Current Population Surveys (months-in-sample 1-4 only),
　　　ages 18-49.

Table 2

Percentage Married or Cohabiting by Sex, Race/ethnicity and Generational Status

	Men			Women		
	Married	Cohabiting	Cohabiting Among Partnered	Married	Cohabiting	Cohabiting Among Partnered
NH-White						
1st Generation	59.1	3.7	5.9	67.4	3.6	5.1
Arrived Age 18+	66.6	3.6	5.2	75.6	3.0	3.9
Arrived Age 0-17	45.4	3.8	7.7	51.5	4.7	8.3
2nd Generation	47.7	5.4	10.1	54.1	5.7	9.5
3rd+ Generation	53.1	5.6	9.5	58.0	5.8	9.2
NH-Black						
1st Generation	38.7	4.1	9.5	41.3	3.8	8.5
Arrived Age 18+	46.9	4.3	8.4	50.2	3.7	6.8
Arrived Age 0-17	24.2	3.6	13.1	26.7	4.0	13.2
2nd Generation	17.1	6.8	28.3	18.2	3.9	17.8
3rd+ Generation	33.4	7.1	17.6	28.6	5.2	15.5
Asian/PI						
1st Generation	56.5	1.8	3.1	65.8	2.5	3.7
Arrived Age 18+	66.5	1.3	2.0	74.5	2.1	2.7
Arrived Age 0-17	36.9	2.8	7.0	46.0	3.5	7.1
2nd Generation	25.9	3.0	10.3	31.5	5.8	15.6
3rd+ Generation	42.2	4.1	8.9	49.2	9.2	15.7
Mexican						
1st Generation	53.6	4.4	7.6	65.5	4.8	6.8
Arrived Age 18+	55.5	4.6	7.6	70.6	4.3	5.8
Arrived Age 0-17	51.2	4.3	7.7	58.5	5.4	8.5
2nd Generation	34.4	5.6	13.9	42.3	5.3	11.2
3rd+ Generation	45.3	7.4	14.0	48.5	7.6	13.5
Puerto Rican						
1st Generation	47.9	9.4	16.4	45.3	6.9	13.1
Arrived Age 18+	58.5	9.7	14.2	52.5	5.6	9.6
Arrived Age 0-17	40.1	9.2	18.7	40.6	7.7	15.9
2nd Generation	37.3	8.9	19.2	36.7	7.6	17.1
3rd+ Generation	32.2	10.1	23.9	36.3	7.0	16.1
Other Hisp.						
1st Generation	48.4	4.9	9.2	55.7	5.2	8.6
Arrived Age 18+	53.8	5.3	8.9	62.2	5.1	7.6
Arrived Age 0-17	39.9	4.3	9.7	44.6	5.4	10.8
2nd Generation	28.6	4.4	13.4	35.0	5.3	13.2
3rd+ Generation	43.7	8.6	16.5	48.5	6.9	12.4

Source: 2000-2004 March Current Population Surveys (months-in-sample 1-4 only), ages 18-49.

Table 3

Multinomial Logistic Regression Models of Union Status
(Married, Cohabiting vs. Unpartnered), By Sex

	Men		Women	
	Married	Cohabiting	Married	Cohabiting
Generation (Ref=3rd+)				
1st Generation--Arrived Age 18+	0.126 ***	-0.653 ***	0.653 ***	-0.183 ***
1st Generation--Arrived Age 0-17	0.014	-0.588 ***	0.200 ***	-0.305 ***
2nd Generation	-0.328 ***	-0.216 ***	-0.230 ***	-0.238 ***
Race/Ethnicity (Ref=NH-White)				
Black	-0.907 ***	-0.371 ***	-1.305 ***	-0.815 ***
Asian/PI	-0.328 ***	-0.667 ***	-0.333 ***	-0.266 ***
Mexican	-0.276 ***	-0.369 ***	-0.029	-0.033
Puerto Rican	-0.367 ***	0.315 ***	-0.782 ***	-0.100
Other Hispanic	-0.475 ***	-0.165 *	-0.551 ***	-0.153 *
Years of Education	0.077 ***	-0.008	0.026 ***	-0.099 ***
Years-squared	0.003 ***	-0.009 ***	0.001 *	-0.008 ***
Age	0.108 ***	0.028 ***	0.084 ***	-0.008 ***
Age-squared	-0.006 ***	-0.006 ***	-0.006 ***	-0.005 ***
Number of Children (Ref=0)				
1 Child	2.021 ***	0.999 ***	0.768 ***	-0.044
2 Children	2.784 ***	1.146 ***	1.360 ***	-0.007
3+ Children	2.933 ***	0.930 ***	1.500 ***	-0.087 *
Employment Status (Ref=Fulltime)				
Parttime	-0.929 ***	-0.863 ***	0.367 ***	-0.240 ***
Unemployed	-0.809 ***	-0.615 ***	-0.061 *	0.041
Not in Labor Force	-0.834 ***	-1.635 ***	0.781 ***	-0.174 ***
Poverty Status (Ref=150%+)				
In Poverty	-0.590 ***	1.901 ***	-1.897 ***	-0.210 ***
101-124% of Poverty	-0.311 ***	1.304 ***	-1.223 ***	-0.198 ***
125-149% of Poverty	-0.287 ***	1.101 ***	-1.007 ***	-0.083
Intercept	-0.207 ***	-1.778 ***	0.301 ***	-1.128 ***
N	194,524		210,426	
Pseudo R-sq	0.324		0.203	

Source: 2000-2004 March CPS, ages 18-49

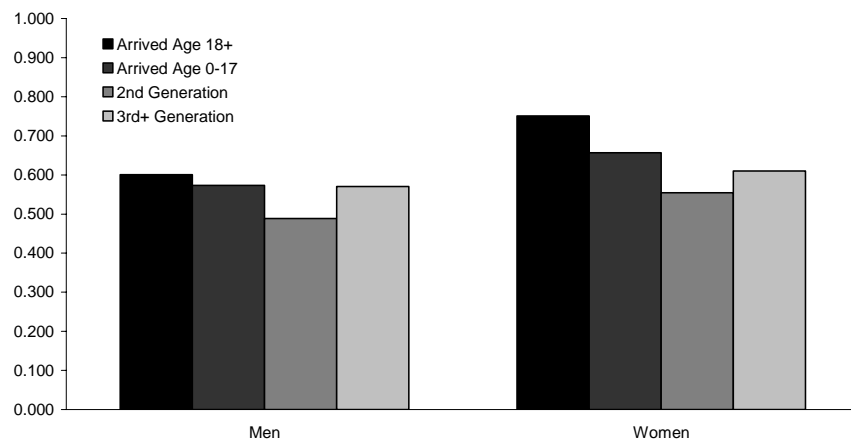Figure 1. Predicted Proportion Cohabiting and Married by Generational Status and Sex

Predicted Proportion Married
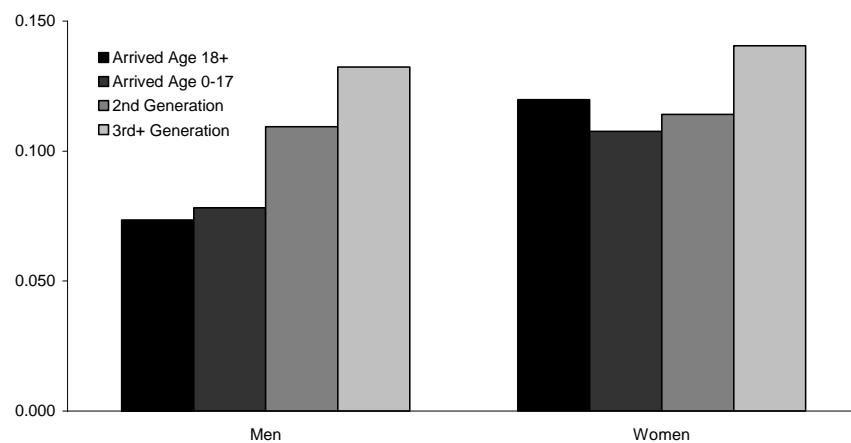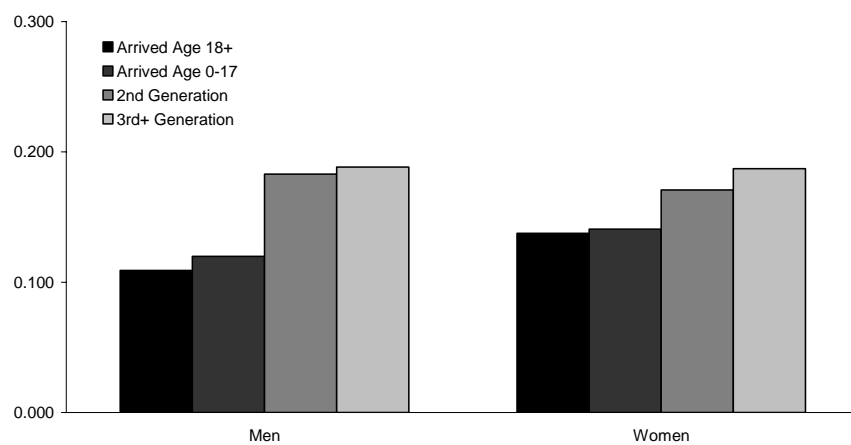

Predicted Proportion Cohabiting

Predicted Proportion Cohabiting Among Those in a Union

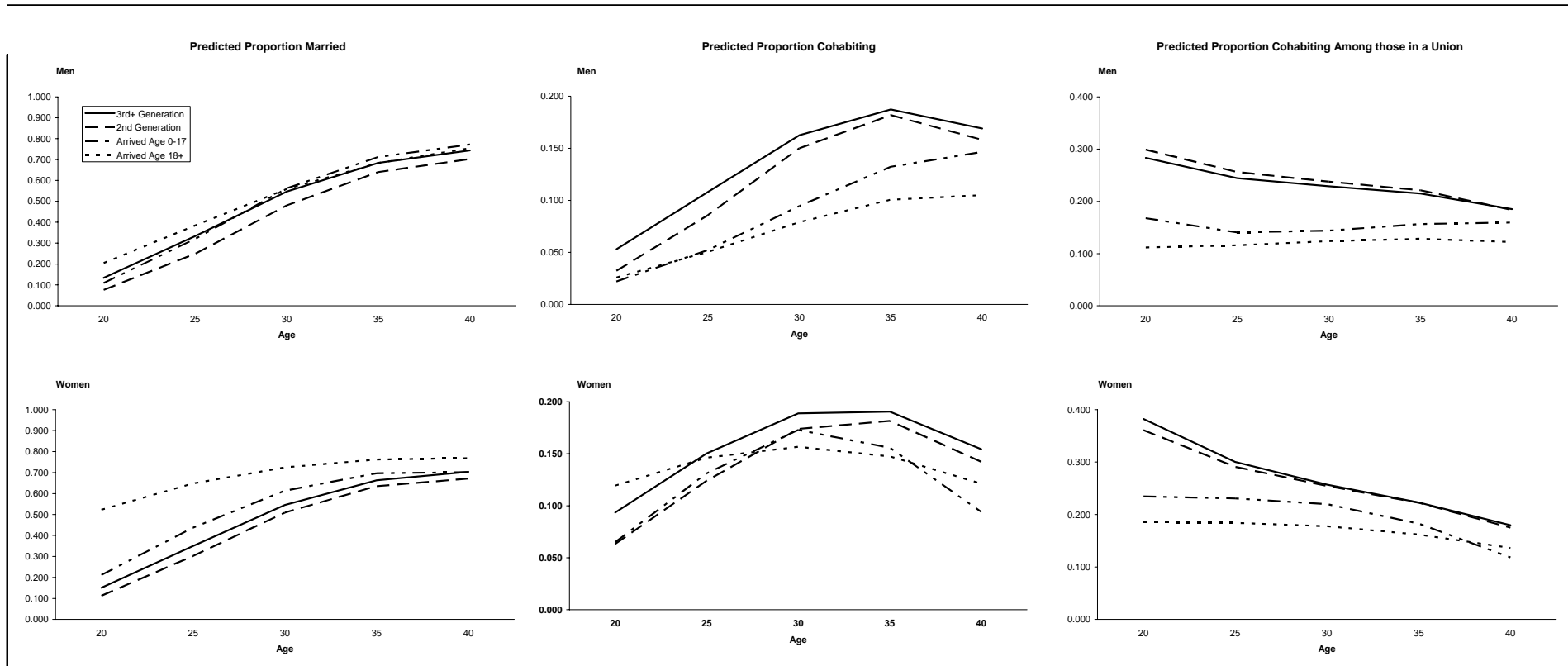Figure 2. Predicted Proportion Cohabiting and Married by Generational Status, Age and Sex

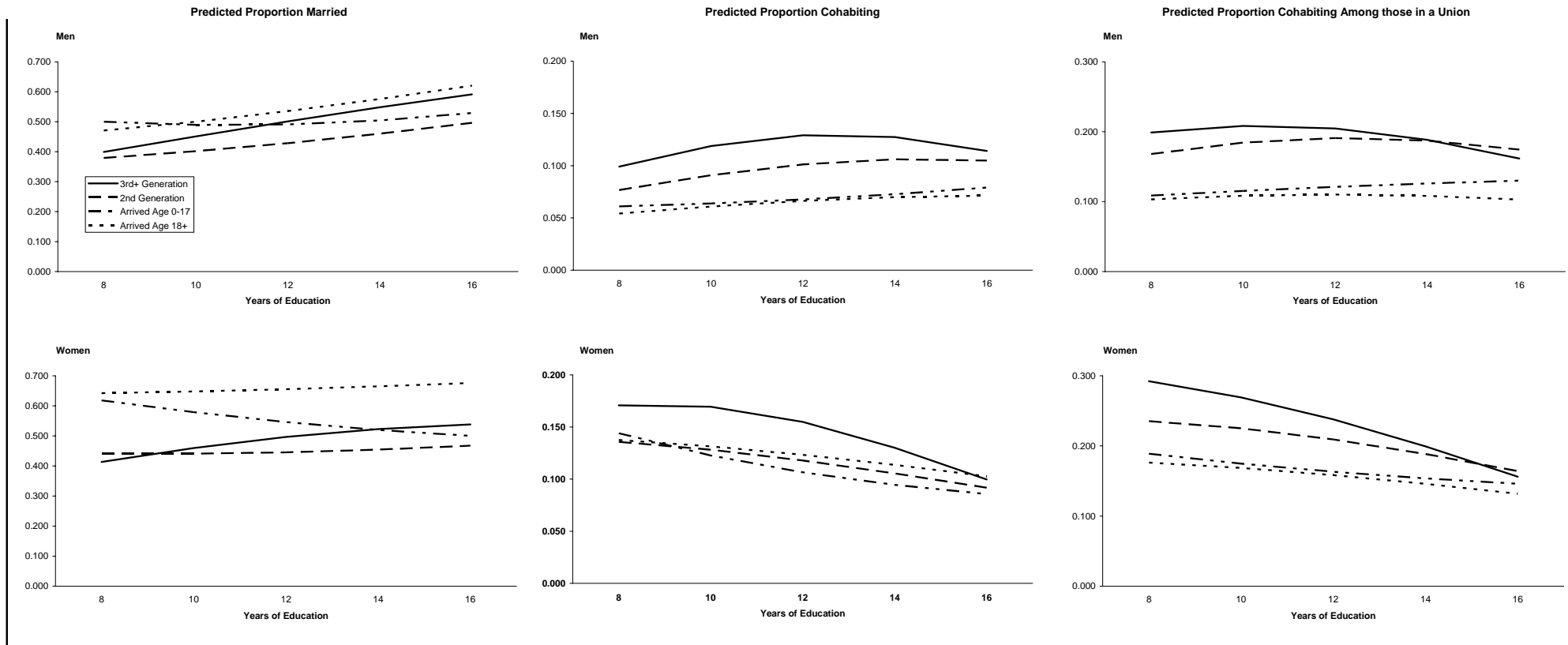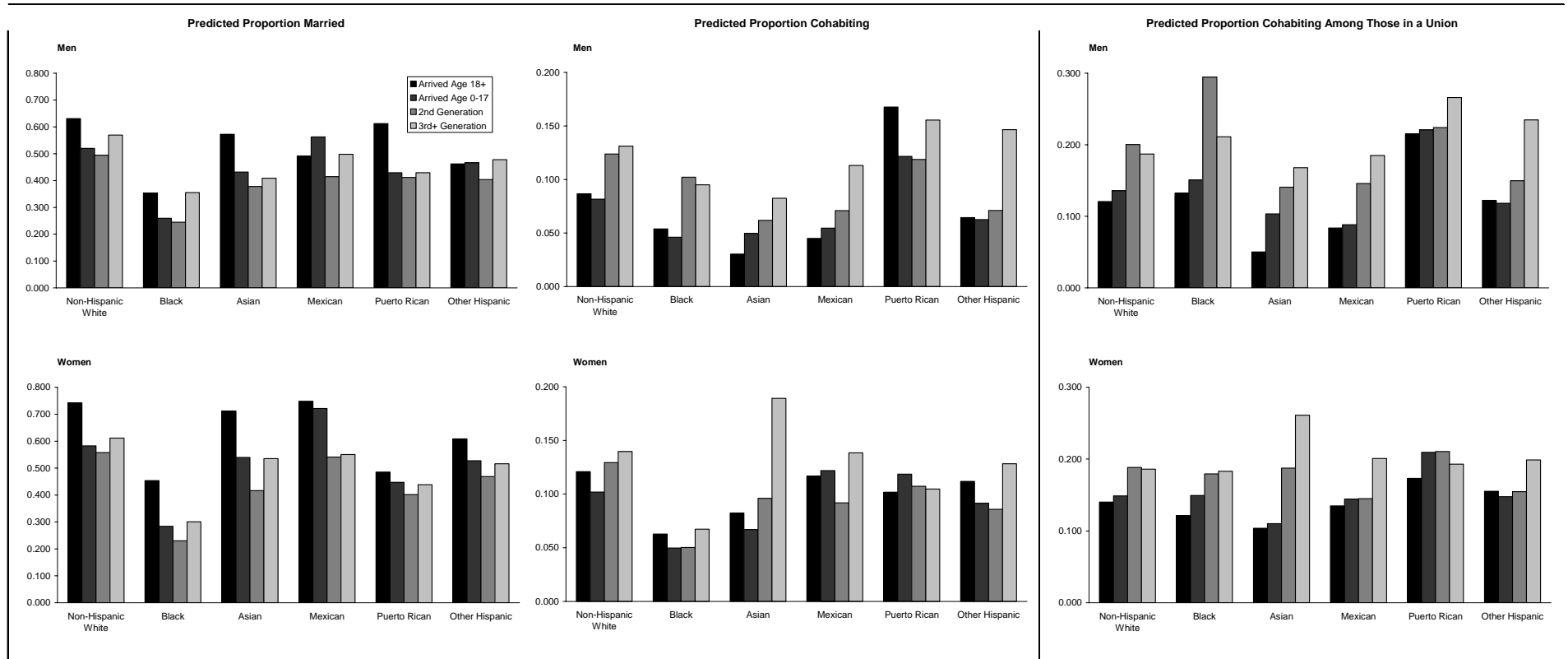Figure 3. Predicted Proportion Cohabiting and Married by Generational Status, Education, and Sex

Figure 4. Predicted Proportion Cohabiting and Married by Generational Status, Race/ethnicity and Sex

Appendix Table 1

Sample Means by Gender and Generation

	Men				Women			
	All	1st Gen	2nd Gen	3rd+ Gen	All	1st Gen	2nd Gen	3rd+ Gen
Current Union Status								
Married	0.582	0.531	0.385	0.500	0.535	0.618	0.442	0.528
Cohabiting	0.042	0.039	0.054	0.059	0.039	0.041	0.056	0.058
Unpartnered	0.376	0.430	0.562	0.441	0.426	0.341	0.501	0.413
Generational Status								
1st Generation	0.166	---	---	---	0.153	---	---	---
2nd Generation	0.072	---	---	---	0.072	---	---	---
3rd+ Generation	0.762	---	---	---	0.775	---	---	---
Race/ethnicity								
NH-White	0.686	0.175	0.458	0.820	0.675	0.183	0.448	0.794
Black	0.118	0.074	0.047	0.134	0.139	0.078	0.048	0.159
Asian/PI	0.047	0.208	0.112	0.006	0.049	0.246	0.108	0.005
Mexican	0.100	0.357	0.236	0.031	0.089	0.301	0.240	0.033
Puerto Rican	0.012	0.027	0.067	0.003	0.013	0.032	0.077	0.003
Other Hispanic	0.037	0.159	0.081	0.006	0.035	0.160	0.079	0.006
Age								
age (centered at 34)	-0.047	-0.266	-2.768	0.258	0.111	0.240	-2.591	0.336
age-sq	84.747	72.618	94.534	86.471	83.846	71.690	94.186	85.285
Number of Children								
None	0.489	0.401	0.511	0.507	0.395	0.300	0.407	0.412
One	0.205	0.219	0.202	0.203	0.247	0.255	0.242	0.246
Two	0.194	0.216	0.179	0.190	0.226	0.255	0.217	0.221
Three +	0.111	0.164	0.108	0.100	0.133	0.190	0.135	0.121
Employment Status								
Full Time	0.732	0.763	0.669	0.731	0.538	0.470	0.511	0.554
Part Time	0.082	0.076	0.102	0.082	0.172	0.126	0.192	0.179
Unemployed	0.054	0.051	0.061	0.053	0.040	0.045	0.043	0.039
Not in Labor Force	0.132	0.110	0.167	0.133	0.251	0.359	0.254	0.229
Income-to-Poverty Ratio								
Below	0.096	0.155	0.092	0.083	0.115	0.170	0.107	0.104
100-124%	0.035	0.059	0.034	0.029	0.039	0.065	0.039	0.034
125-149%	0.040	0.069	0.039	0.034	0.042	0.066	0.040	0.037
150%+	0.830	0.716	0.834	0.854	0.804	0.698	0.814	0.825
Education								
Years (centered at 13)	0.045	-1.234	0.361	0.294	0.222	-1.001	0.478	0.440
years-sq.	8.021	19.464	6.771	5.641	7.212	17.186	6.322	5.325
N	194,524	33,632	14,367	146,525	210,426	33,401	15,809	161,216

Appendix Table 2

Interaction Effects of Age and Generation on Union Status
(Multinomial Logistic Regression Models), By Sex

	Men		Women	
	Married	Cohabiting	Married	Cohabiting
Generation (Ref=3rd+)				
1st Generation--Arrived Age 18+	0.000	-0.762 ***	0.569 ***	-0.294 ***
1st Generation--Arrived Age 0-17	0.116 **	-0.485 ***	0.200 ***	-0.180 *
2nd Generation	-0.210 ***	-0.044	0.088 ***	-0.007 ***
Age	0.106 ***	0.024 ***	-0.027 ***	-0.034 ***
x 1st Gen.--arrived 18+	-0.006 *	0.021 ***	0.003	0.006
x 1st Gen.--arrived 0-17	0.013 ***	0.043 ***	-0.054 ***	-0.012 *
x 2nd Gen.	0.011 ***	0.008	-0.124 ***	-0.063
Age-squared	-0.006 ***	-0.006 ***	-0.006 ***	-0.005 ***
x 1st Gen.--arrived 18+	0.002 ***	0.002 *	0.003 ***	0.002 **
x 1st Gen.--arrived 0-17	-0.001 **	0.001	-0.001 *	-0.004 ***
x 2nd Gen.	-0.002 ***	-0.002 **	-0.001 ***	-0.002 **
Intercept	-0.212 ***	-1.790 ***	0.287 ***	-1.147 ***
N	194,524		210,426	
Pseudo R-sq	0.324		0.204	

Source: 2000-2004 March CPS, ages 18-49

Note: Models also include race/ethnicity, age, number of children, employment and
poverty status.

Appendix Table 3

Interaction Effects of Educational Attainment and Generation on Union Status
(Multinomial Logistic Regression Models), By Sex

	Men		Women	
	Married	Cohabiting	Married	Cohabiting
Generation (Ref=3rd+)				
1st Generation--Arrived Age 18+	0.120 ***	-0.709 ***	-0.247 ***	-0.285 ***
1st Generation--Arrived Age 0-17	-0.117 ***	-0.682 ***	0.619 ***	-0.219 ***
2nd Generation	-0.327 ***	-0.246 ***	0.052 ***	-0.102 ***
Years of education	0.094 ***	-0.008	-0.105 ***	0.035 *
x 1st Gen.--arrived 18+	-0.013	0.036 *	-0.035 ***	0.040 *
x 1st Gen.--arrived 0-17	-0.068 ***	0.046 *	-0.031 ***	0.056 ***
x 2nd Gen.	-0.030 **	0.034	0.085 **	-0.410 ***
Years-squared	-0.002 *	-0.014 ***	-0.005 ***	-0.012 ***
x 1st Gen.--arrived 18+	0.004 ***	0.009 ***	0.006 ***	0.010 ***
x 1st Gen.--arrived 0-17	0.007 ***	0.015 ***	0.009 ***	0.015 ***
x 2nd Gen.	0.004	0.005	0.007 ***	0.008 *
Intercept	-0.192 ***	-1.762 ***	0.319 ***	-1.112 ***
N	194,524		210,426	
Pseudo R-sq	0.324		0.204	

Source: 2000-2004 March CPS, ages 18-49

Note: Models also include race/ethnicity, age, number of children, employment and
poverty status.

Appendix Table 4

Interaction Effects of Race/ethnicity and Generation on Union Status
(Multinomial Logistic Regression Models), By Sex

	Men		Women	
	Married	Cohabiting	Married	Cohabiting
Generation (Ref=3rd+)				
1st Generation--Arrived Age 18+	0.255 ***	-0.465 ***	0.606 ***	-0.166
1st Generation--Arrived Age 0-17	-0.200 **	-0.529 ***	-0.119 *	-0.358 **
2nd Generation	-0.303 ***	-0.066	-0.221 ***	-0.089
Race/Ethnicity (Ref=NH-White)				
Black	-0.877 ***	-0.362 ***	-1.297 ***	-0.810 ***
x 1st Gen.--arrived 18+	-0.264 **	-0.148	0.052	0.090
x 1st Gen.--arrived 0-17	-0.253 *	-0.248	0.038	0.039
x 2nd Gen.	-0.229	0.145	-0.142	-0.222
Asian/PI	-0.648 ***	-0.518 **	-0.312 ***	0.362 **
x 1st Gen.--arrived 18+	0.405 ***	-0.591 *	0.160	-0.789 ***
x 1st Gen.--arrived 0-17	0.292 *	-0.012	0.139	-0.822 ***
x 2nd Gen.	0.171	-0.244	-0.257 *	-0.698 ***
Mexican	-0.290 ***	-0.169 **	-0.250 ***	-0.011
x 1st Gen.--arrived 18+	-0.280 ***	-0.531 ***	0.282 ***	-0.029
x 1st Gen.--arrived 0-17	0.462 ***	-0.264	0.867 ***	0.212
x 2nd Gen.	-0.033	-0.448 ***	0.183 **	-0.374 **
Puerto Rican	-0.565 ***	0.199	-0.700 ***	-0.327
x 1st Gen.--arrived 18+	0.487 *	0.555 *	-0.418 *	0.132
x 1st Gen.--arrived 0-17	0.200	0.244	0.155	0.498
x 2nd Gen.	0.230	-0.245	0.071	0.115
Other Hispanic	-0.369 ***	0.129	-0.387 ***	-0.099
x 1st Gen.--arrived 18+	-0.318 **	-0.449 *	-0.231 *	0.010
x 1st Gen.--arrived 0-17	0.152	-0.416	0.164	-0.022
x 2nd Gen.	0.002	-0.742 ***	0.031	-0.362
Intercept	-0.206 ***	-1.791 ***	0.309 ***	-1.133 ***
N	194,524		210,426	
Pseudo R-sq	0.324		0.204	

Source: 2000-2004 March CPS, ages 18-49

Note: Models also include educational attainment, age, number of children,
    employment and poverty status.