His and Hers Baggage: Whose Weighs More? Gender and Union Formation following a Non-Coresidential First Birth

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Conclusions and Limitations

Gender Differences:
- Mothers report a lower odds of forming any type of union.
- Every model suggests mothers report higher odds of fathers entering into marriage rather than cohabitation.
- However, net of controls, mothers report a higher odds than fathers of cohabiting compared to marrying.

Gender and Intendedness:
- Mothers who report a wanted birth appear to transition rather quickly into cohabiting unions.
- In contrast, fathers who report a wanted birth report a lower odds of entering any type of union.

Limitations:
- Limited to first births within 5 years of interview.
- Could not determine if union was with biological parent or a new partner.
- Limited to first birth.

Non-coresident with the other parent at time of child's birth

Research focused primarily on mothers' perspectives.
- Research on Nonmarital Fertility
- Usually unintended but not always
- Differential access to reproductive technologies
- Volatility in "Fragile Families"

Becoming an Unmarried Mother

Research on Nonmarital Fertility
- Usually unintended but not always
- Differential access to reproductive technologies
- Volatility in "Fragile Families"

40% 20% 0% 100% 50% 0

Research has not focused solely on non-coresidential, nonmarital fertility
- Non-coresident with the other parent at time of child's birth

Data and Methods

Measure of Intendedness

- (Mistimed, early)
- (Father)
- (Mother, mistimed)
- (Mother, wanted)
- (Mistimed, early)
- (Father)
- (Mother, mistimed)
- (Mother, wanted)
- (Mistimed)
- (Mother)
- (Mistimed)
- (Mother)

Conclusions and Limitations

Descriptively speaking, we find minimal gender differences in the hazards of censoring. However, additional analyses demonstrated important variation in the types of unions formed, birth intendedness, and the interaction between gender and intendedness.

Evaluating the Interaction between Gender and Intendedness with Targeted Centering

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- Non-coresident with the other parent at time of child's birth

Gaps in the Research

- Research has not focused solely on non-coresidential, nonmarital fertility and subsequent union formation.
- No research has examined the effects of child's current residence status on union formation.
- Gender differences may be a proxy for relationship characteristics that may progress into a consensual relationship with biological parent

Current Study

- We consider the effects of experiencing a recent, non-coresidential first birth on subsequent union formation.
- We also differentiate between coresidential union formation, cohabiting, or entering directly into marriage.
- Analyses pay careful attention to ...
  - Gender
  - Intendedness
  - The interaction between gender and intendedness

Guiding Hypotheses

1. Mothers are less likely than fathers to enter into a union following a non-coresidential first birth.
2. Parents who label the birth as unwanted are less likely to enter a union than parents who have a wanted (mistimed and/or early) birth.
3. The effects of intendedness vary for mothers and fathers.

Investigating the Interaction between Gender and Intendedness with Targeted Centering

Analytic Strategy and Results: Event History Analyses

We consider the effects of experiencing a recent, non-coresidential first birth on subsequent union formation.
- Initial analysis considers forming any union.
- Next, we differentiate between coresidential union formation, forming a cohabiting relationship, or entering directly into marriage.
- Analyses pay careful attention to ...
  - Gender
  - Intendedness
  - The interaction between gender and intendedness

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Descriptively speaking, we find minimal gender differences in the hazards of censoring. However, additional analyses demonstrated important variation in the types of unions formed, birth intendedness, and the interaction between gender and intendedness.

Experience of Having an Unwanted Rather than a Mistimed Birth

Mothers who reported having an unwanted birth are less likely to cohabitate rather than remain single, but if they form a union, they are more likely to marry rather than cohabitate. Fathers experiencing an unwanted birth are less likely to form marital but not cohabiting unions.

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