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**The Changing Institution of Marriage:**

**Adolescents' Expectations to Cohabit and Marry**

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**ABSTRACT**

Cohabitation has become a typical part of most young adults' pathway toward marriage. Yet, most prior work focuses on expectations to marry and has ignored cohabitation. We examine factors associated with teenagers' expectations to cohabit and their expectations to marry. Since most young adults are not replacing marriage with cohabitation, but instead cohabit and then marry, it is important to study teenagers' joint expectations to cohabit as well as marry. Our analyses draw on recently collected data from the Toledo Relationships Study (n=1,293). We find that adolescents are less certain about their cohabitation than marriage expectations. Interactions with the opposite sex, traditional values, risk and resilience factors, and parents influence adolescent's union formation expectations. The findings from this work suggest that adolescents are including cohabitation as part of their future life trajectory, but they are rarely substituting cohabitation for marriage.

## **Adolescents' Expectations to Cohabit and Marry**

The traditional pattern of courtship in the United States involves clearly delineated stages progressing from dating to engagement to marriage. However, in recent years this pattern has become more complex. Increasingly, couples advance from dating to living together, which may or may not lead to marriage (Bumpass & Lu, 2000). Cohabitation is now an important part of the contemporary path into marriage, the majority of recently married young adults first cohabited and then married (Bumpass, 1998). The increase in cohabitation has been fueled in part by the growing acceptance of cohabitation, and research evidence shows that young adults who approve of cohabitation are more likely to cohabit relative to their counterparts (Axinn & Thornton, 1993). A limitation of prior research on cohabitation is it is overwhelmingly based on surveys of adults. We move beyond prior work by focusing earlier in the life course and asking *adolescents* about whether they expect to cohabit as well as marry. Adolescent expectations are indicative of possible future trends in cohabitation. We argue that it is important to focus on adolescent's expectations to cohabit because it demonstrates the increasing acceptance of cohabitation as a potential future union experience and signals how cohabitation fits into the American family system.

We use structured interview data drawn from the 2001-2002 Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (n=1,316). These data are designed to examine in detail the nature of adolescents' heterosexual relationship experiences. In this analysis we first identify how adolescent characteristics are associated with expectations to cohabit and expectations to marry. Given that most young adults both cohabit and marry, we subsequently explore teenagers' joint expectations to both cohabit and marry. This work draws on a social learning and risk and

resilience framework. We focus on the influence of relationship context, adolescent values, intergenerational effects of parents' family behavior and attitudes, and demographics on adolescent's union formation expectations. This provides us with recent information about expectations to cohabit and marry from the next generation of young adults who will be making decisions about cohabiting and marrying.

## **BACKGROUND**

Marriage is become increasingly deinstitutionalized with a weakening of social norms that define marriage (Cherlin, 2004). Evidence that supports the deinstitutionalization includes the delay in marriage, low stability of marriage, and growth in cohabitation (e.g. Bumpass & Lu, 2000). At the same time, researchers cite evidence of the existence of continued support for marriage. The evidence supporting this notion is that most Americans eventually marry and attitudes favor marriage. One of the most popular pieces of evidence is that high school seniors' attitudes about marriage have remained consistently positive over the last 20 years (Thornton & DeMarco, 2001). Teenagers' high regard marriage is indicative that marriage is here to stay. One way to further the discussion of the deinstitutionalization of marriage is to consider adolescents' views of cohabitation. A focus on teenager's attitudes about cohabitation and marriage informs us about the potential future value of marriage and how marriage and cohabitation are interconnected.

Adolescent expectations for future cohabitation and marriage plans provide some clues about potentially newly emerging norms regarding union formation. In fact, most theories of family change are based in part on ideas about fundamental shifts in social values or norms. For example, Lesthaeghe (1995) argues that ideational shifts toward more secular and individualistic values are the source of family change. This weakening of the institutional leverage over family

life results in new family patterns that mesh with individuals' needs and desires (Lesthaeghe, 1998). Family change also occurs when there are shifts in the timing of life events. The delay or acceleration of life events may occur with new age graded norms regarding the appropriate timing of transitions (Shanahan, 2000). For example, the acceptability of a delay in the age at marriage creates the life course 'space' for cohabitation in early adulthood. One way these new norms develop is via normative succession, which occurs when new cohorts pursue novel behavior that was viewed as deviant in the past but becomes widespread and acceptable (Ryder, 1965; White & Klein, 2002). Thus, family change occurs and brings in a "new normative order" (White & Klein, 2002, p.105). Understanding adolescents' attitudes about cohabitation and marriage provides insight into the new normative order.

Another reason to analyze *adolescents'* expectations about both cohabitation and marriage is that one of the primary individual-level factors that predict behavior is the intention to perform that behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The factors that determine expectations or intentions need to be analyzed when the aim is to understand, and not simply to predict, union formation behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Indeed, young adults' positive attitudes about marriage are related to marriage (Axinn & Thornton, 1992; Clarkberg, Stolzenberg, & Waite, 1993; Cunningham & Thornton, 2004) and their positive cohabitation attitudes are tied to cohabitation (Barber, Axinn & Thornton, 2001; Cunningham & Thornton, 2005). Tucker (2000) makes a strong case for focusing on expectations or intentions arguing that, "Behavior can be meaningfully interpreted only when we understand the system of beliefs that surround that act" (p. 166).

### *Adolescent Marriage Expectations*

Several descriptive studies have presented trends in high school senior attitudes about marriage. Monitoring the Future, the on-going national survey of high school seniors, allows analysis of trends because questions have been repeated for over a twenty five year period. The data indicate that the vast majority (78%) of high school seniors expect to marry in the future (Thornton & Young-DeMarco 2001). Over the last two decades, these expectations to marry have remained consistently high. In addition, most high school seniors value marriage. Almost three-quarters (72%) believe that a good marriage and family life are extremely important (Thornton & Young-DeMarco 2001). The gender gap is quite large with substantially more girls than boys valuing marriage (Popenoe 2005). The trends in attitudes toward marriage appear to have remained quite stable over time (Popenoe 2005; Thornton & Young-DeMarco 2001).

Nearly all of the prior work on adolescent marriage expectations highlights intergenerational family processes (e.g., Axinn & Thornton, 1996; Crissey, 2005; Ganong, Coleman, & Brown, 1981; Paddock-Ellard & Thomas, 1981; Tasker & Richards, 1994). The most commonly researched question is how parent's family behavior influences adolescents' attitudes toward marriage. Studies consistently show that children living in single parent and stepparent families have more positive attitudes towards divorce and weaker support for marriage (e.g., Axinn & Thornton, 1996; Coleman & Ganong, 1984; Ganong & Brown, 1981; Greenberg & Nay, 1982; Martin, Martin, & Martin, 2001; Moore, 1991; Tasker & Richards, 1994). One the primary mechanisms linking parent behavior and adolescent attitudes is social learning processes.

The marked race differences in the propensity to marry have resulted in a number of studies focusing on race and marriage attitudes among adults (e.g., Bulcroft & Bulcroft, 1993;

South, 1993). However, relatively few studies focus on racial differences in marriage attitudes among adolescents. Prior work indicates that black teens more often express positive attitudes toward delaying marriage and express more reservations about marriage than white teenagers (Crissey, 2005; Moore & Stief, 1991). Crissey (2005) reports that white boys and girls are more likely to expect to be married by age 25 than black boys and girls. She finds that the racial gap persists net of the nature of romantic relationships, family background, and individual characteristics of the adolescent.

Mexican American adults report more positive attitudes toward marriage than Whites (Oropesa 1996), but only a few studies have considered Latino adolescent's marriage expectations. In terms of general attitudes, there are relatively modest differences according to ethnicity. In 1992, 81% of Latino and White high school seniors and 74% of Black high school seniors believe it is very important to "find the right to person to marry and have a happy family life" (Marchena & Waite 2002). Data from the 1996 Add Health indicates that Latino and White teens share similar levels of expecting to marry by age 25 (Crissey 2005). For example, 55% of Mexican American and 51% of white girls state they have a "good chance" or "almost certain chance" to marry by age 25 while 34% of Black girls expect to do so. This question refers to expectations to marry as well as the timing of marriage.

#### *Adolescent Cohabitation Expectations*

To date, only a few studies have focused on adolescents' views towards *cohabitation*. This is not surprising as cohabitation has only recently become a typical relationship experience. Adolescents' views about cohabitation may be more ambiguous than those about marriage, because cohabitation is not as clearly institutionalized as marriage (Nock, 1995) and lacks a symbolic event (wedding) to mark the beginning of the union (Manning & Smock, 2005). The



meaning of cohabitation is not universal and consistent among adults (Manning & Smock, 2005) so we expect teens to express more uncertainty about cohabitation than marriage.

Analysis based on Monitoring the Future shows increases in the acceptability of cohabitation (Popenoe 2005; Thornton & Young-Demarco, 2001). The percent of young women agreeing with the statement, it is a good idea to cohabit before marriage to determine compatibility, changed from 33% to 60% between the late 1970s and the late 1990s, and from 47% to 67% for young men (Thornton & Young-Demarco, 2001). These findings show that the perceived acceptability of cohabitation is growing and greater among high school boys than girls. Other work using more select samples shows increasing adolescent support for cohabitation. Martin and Martin (1984) interviewed 5,237 college students and report that 28% want to live with someone before marrying them. Martin, Specter, Martin, and Martin (2003) surveying 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders in Dallas, Texas report that half of the teens express positive attitudes toward cohabitation, and one-quarter express negative attitudes. Summarizing, these research findings reflect increasingly positive attitudes toward cohabitation among adolescents, although support for cohabitation is by no means unequivocal.

Similar to work on marriage, scholars have examined how family processes influence adolescent attitudes toward cohabitation. Much of this work is based on a unique data set, the Intergenerational Panel Study of Parents and Children, that includes children's and parent's attitudes and behavior over time. The children that have been followed were white 18 year olds initially interviewed in 1980 and then followed up in 1985 and 1993. These data indicate that parents who are divorced, less religious, and possess more positive attitudes towards cohabitation have children who express more positive attitudes toward cohabitation (Axinn & Thornton, 1996; Cunningham & Thornton, 2004). Thus, some of the same processes that seem to influence

marriage attitudes are related to cohabitation attitudes. Recently this work has been extended to include the effect of child characteristics on cohabitation attitudes. Children who are less religious, sexually active, and male express more positive cohabitation attitudes (Cunningham & Thornton, 2004). A limitation of these analyses is that much of the growth in acceptance of cohabitation has occurred in the last 25 years. As such, we are uncertain how new trends in acceptance affect behavior and intentions. Also data limitations make the influence of race and gender unclear. Given the changing attitudes toward cohabitation and growth in cohabitation, these intergenerational findings should be replicated using a more recent and diverse sample of adolescents.

### **CURRENT INVESTIGATION**

The primary aim of this paper is to examine the factors associated with adolescents' expectations to cohabit and to marry. Research that taps adolescents' own expectations to cohabit and to marry will provide a better understanding of the motivation to cohabit and to marry and help predict future levels and patterns of cohabitation. To date, only a handful of studies include adolescents' expectations about cohabitation. Given that the majority of young adults cohabit and then eventually marry, we examine factors associated with teen's expectations to both cohabit and marry versus a more traditional pathway that involves only marriage. It is important to avoid the tendency to examine cohabitation and marriage formation expectations in isolation of one another. Our work provides an important update to prior studies by relying on responses from a racially diverse recent cohort of teenagers.

We investigate a broad array of parent and child characteristics thought to influence cohabitation and marriage attitudes among adolescents. Research has documented that child and family characteristics influence teenage behavior (e.g., sexual activity, grades, delinquency), but

little work examines adolescents' union formation expectations. Additionally, some of the same individual characteristics (e.g., race, gender, religiosity) that are related to adults' decisions to cohabit and marry may be related to teenagers' expectations to cohabit and marry. Thus, we draw on the adolescent risk and resilience, intergenerational processes as well as adult union formation literature to evaluate how heterosexual experiences, traditionalism, risk and resilience behaviors, and parents influence adolescent cohabitation and marriage expectations.

First, adolescents' dating and sexual experiences with the opposite sex may be associated with their expectations to cohabit and marry. The typical sequencing of events is to date, have sex, and later form unions (Longmore et al., 2001; Thornton, 1990). Teens who are dating and having sex have begun the sequence of activities that precede cohabitation and marriage. Crissey (2005) reports that teens who have serious dating relationships report a greater likelihood of expecting to marry by age 25 than teens who have not dated. Cunningham and Thornton (2004) found that 18 year olds with more sexual partners had more positive attitudes towards cohabitation. Dating and sexual relationships set a context in which teens may be considering possible futures with their partner either specifically or more generally. We expect that teenagers who have greater interaction with the opposite sex, via dating or sexual intercourse, will have stronger expectations to form coresidential unions, cohabit as well as marry.

Second, views about cohabitation may be positively related to nontraditional attitudes and values. Adult cohabitators typically are less traditional than their noncohabiting counterparts (Axinn & Barber, 1997; Clarkberg, Stolzenberg, & Waite, 1993). Similarly, adult cohabitators exhibit lower levels of religious involvement than other young adults (Thornton, Axinn, & Hill, 1992). In addition, adolescents' strong religious beliefs are positively associated with their marriage expectations (Crissey, 2005). We tap into traditionalism with measures of attitudes

about waiting until marriage to have sex, as well as including indicators of religiosity. Based on the adult behavioral findings, we expect that adolescents who hold less traditional beliefs and are less religious will have positive cohabitation expectations.

Third, a developmental approach to the risk and resilience framework suggests that adolescent experiences are associated with transitions to adulthood, and by extension may influence adolescent expectations regarding adulthood. Even though cohabitation is widespread, adolescent behavior may distinguish expectations to cohabit and marry. Adolescent involvement in relatively prosocial activities are expected to be associated with higher expectations to marry and lower expectations to cohabit while their embeddedness in antisocial networks may be tied to their elevated expectations to cohabit. Researchers find that cohabitation is more common among young adults who are not in college and do not have college degrees (Bumpass & Lu, 2000). The teenage equivalent to measures of educational attainment are grades in school and educational aspirations. We expect that adolescents who are performing less well in school and have lower educational aspirations may more often report expectations to cohabit and state lower expectations to marry. Adult cohabitators have more trouble with alcohol and drugs (Booth & Johnson, 1988; Horowitz et al., 1998; Yamaguchi & Kandel, 1985). The adolescent analogue to adult problems with drugs and alcohol is juvenile delinquency. Thus, we expect that adolescents who are more delinquent will have greater expectations for cohabitation and weaker expectations to marry.

Fourth, adolescent expectations may be based on social learning and intergenerational processes. Parents are expected to influence their children's cohabitation expectations via parental modeling, socialization, and socioeconomic circumstances. Adolescents may model their parents' family formation behavior. Prior work indicates that children from divorced or

single parent families experience lower adolescent expectations for marriage (e.g., Amato, 1988; Crissey, 2005; Greenburg & Nay, 1982; Ganong, Coleman, & Brown, 1981; Thornton, 1991) and more positive attitudes toward cohabitation (Axinn & Thornton, 1996). Teens with married parents may report higher expectations to marry. Similarly, we believe that teenagers living with cohabiting parents will have higher odds of expecting to cohabit than teens living with married parents. To our knowledge no other project has included the parents' current cohabitation status.

Social learning approaches stress that social ties provide not only warmth or support, but shared messages about attitudes and norms. Parents who have less traditional attitudes may socialize their children to share in those beliefs. Specifically, parents' attitudes about marriage and cohabitation influence their children's marriage and cohabitation attitudes (Axinn & Thornton, 1996; Cunningham & Thornton, 2004). We expect that parents who express less traditional attitudes may more often have children who expect to cohabit and those who state traditional beliefs will have children who expect to only marry and not cohabit.

Parent influence is also affected by socioeconomic circumstances. Parents who have greater economic and social resources may be able to support their children's transitions into adulthood (e.g., paying for college or weddings) (Smock, Manning, & Porter, 2005). Thus, we expect that teenagers from poorer families and with parents who have lower education levels may possess greater expectations to cohabit and weaker marriage expectations.

Finally, the demographic measures (gender, race/ethnicity, and age) act as structuring (Cullen, 1983) elements of adolescents' lives and help to determine the environment in which adolescents are making decisions. Boys report greater acceptability of cohabitation than girls (Cunningham & Thornton, 2004; Thornton & DeMarco, 2001) and lower expectations to marry (Crissey, 2005). The higher cohabitation rates among blacks and Latinos suggest that

cohabitation expectations may be greater among black and Latino youth. Based on prior studies (e.g., Crissey 2005), expectations for marriage are expected to be weaker among black than White or Hispanic teens. Older teens may be closer to making decisions about cohabitation or marriage and may more often expect to cohabit than their younger counterparts. They also may be more influenced by peers who are weighing their own cohabitation and marriage decisions.

Despite the widespread support for marriage, we expect to still observe differentials in teenagers' expectations to marry. Cherlin (2004) argues that marriage is shifting from a "marker of conformity to a marker of prestige" (p. 855). Evidence based on adults suggests that it is important to be set in the relationship (financially and psychologically) before marrying (Smock et al. 2005). Edin, Kefalas, and Reed (2005) describe some of the barriers to marriage as being the revered status of marriage and the high standards that are prerequisites for marriage. Teenagers' observations of their own social world and their parents' experiences may make them quite realistic about what it takes to get married in the United States.

In terms of cohabitation, at least two possible patterns of results may emerge. First, the growth in cohabitation and increasing acceptance of cohabitation may mean that cohabitation is becoming less selective and more broad-based than in the recent past. As a consequence, it is possible that cohabitators are becoming less distinct from non-cohabitators. Thus, we may not observe many differences in adolescents' expectations to cohabit. Second, individuals who never cohabit may increasingly possess strong traditional or conservative values and attitudes as they resist social pressure to cohabit. As a consequence, individuals who do not cohabit may be more selective or distinct from those who do not. If this is the case, then we expect teens who expect to cohabit to be quite different from those who not expect to cohabit in the future. Thus,

factors that predict marriage expectations may, in some cases, operate in the opposite manner when examining expectations to cohabit.

## **DATA AND METHODS**

### *Data*

The Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS) sample was drawn from the year 2000 enrollment records of all youths registered for the seventh, ninth, and eleventh grades in Lucas County, Ohio, a largely urban metropolitan environment that included Toledo. The TARS includes interviews with parents as well as adolescents. The adolescents were asked about their expectations to cohabit and marry. Some data sources include questions about adolescent expectations to marry, but to our knowledge no other recently collected U.S. data source inquires about expectations to cohabit. This provides a unique opportunity to examine the levels of expectations to cohabit and to marry, as well as to examine the factors that are associated with greater expectations to only cohabit.

The TARS sample universe encompassed records elicited from 62 schools across seven school districts. All of the schools complied with our requests for these data. The stratified, random sample (n=1,316) was devised by the National Opinion Research Center, and includes oversamples of African-American and Hispanic adolescents. School attendance was not a requirement for inclusion in the sample, and most interviews were conducted in the respondent's home using preloaded laptops to administer the interview. Our analytic sample is limited to respondents who were not cohabiting or married at the interview (n=1,310). The sample is further limited to respondents who provided valid responses to questions about expectations to marry and to cohabit (n=1,293). The distribution of the sample across the dependent and independent variables is provided in Table 1.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

*Dependent Variables*

Marital Expectations. Adolescents are asked how much they agreed with the following statement: “When you think of your future, do you expect to marry?” Response categories range from 1 to 5 and include: “not at all” (5.4%); “a little” (6.7%); “somewhat” (12%); “probably” (37%); and “definitely” (38.9%). We obtain similar results in our multivariate models when we recode this variable into two categories, little or no expectations and some expectations. Table 1 shows the mean response of 4.0 indicating quite strong expectations for marriage.

Cohabitation Expectations. Adolescents are asked how much they agreed with the following statement: “When you think of your future, do you see yourself living with someone without being married?” Response categories range from 1 to 5: “not at all” (22.6%); “a little” (20.3%); “somewhat” (26.3%); “probably” (22.4%); and “definitely” (8.4%). We tested other formulations of this measure, a dichotomous some expectation and no or little expectation indicator, and find similar effects of covariates in multivariate models. Table 1 shows the mean response of 2.7 suggesting somewhat moderate expectations for cohabitation. This indicates that cohabitation expectations are not as strong as marriage expectations, reflecting the notion that cohabitation is not fully institutionalized in the United States.

Combined Cohabitation and Marriage Expectations. Most young adults are cohabiting first and then later marrying. To capture this family formation pattern we create a variable that is a joint measure of teenagers’ expectations to cohabit and marry. Few respondents fall into the extreme response categories: no marriage and no cohabitation (2%), definite cohabitation and no marriage (0.2%), definite marriage and no cohabitation (10%), and definite cohabitation and marriage (5%). We code replies of “somewhat,” “probably” or “definitely” as having some



expectation to cohabit and marry. Respondents are categorized into four categories: no expectations to cohabit or marry (5.7%); expectations to cohabit and no expectations for marriage (6.5%); expectation to marry and no expectations to cohabit (37.4%); and expectation to both marry and cohabit (50.4%). We experimented with other formulations that treat only those who probably or definitely expect to marry or cohabit. The distribution shifts but the covariates have similar effects in the multivariate models.

### *Independent Variables*

There are five types of independent variables included in our multivariate models: heterosexual relationships, attitudes, risk and resilience factors, intergenerational processes, and demographic variables.

The adolescent relationship context and experience with the opposite sex is measured according to dating and sexual experience. Based on responses to questions about dating relationships, adolescents' responses are coded into three discrete groups: never daters (17.9%), current daters (63.2%), and ever dated but not currently dating (38.9%). Respondents are asked whether they have had sexual intercourse. In our sample one-third (31.3%) are sexually experienced and 68.7% report being virgins.

Adolescents' traditionalism is measured using two items. The first focuses on their attitudes about waiting until marriage for sexual relations. Adolescents are asked the extent to which they agree with the following statement: "A person should only have sex if they are married." Response categories are (1) "strongly disagree" (8.7%); (2) "disagree" (24.2%); (3) "neither agree nor disagree" (23.7%); (4) "agree" (20.9%); and (5) "strongly agree" (22.5%). The second measure is religiosity. It is measured by a single question asking "How important is

religion in your life?” The responses range on a five point scale from “not at all important” to “very important.” The mean response is 3.3 indicating that religion is “somewhat important.”

Risk and resilience factors emphasize adolescents’ academic and risk behaviors.

Adolescents’ academic expectations are measured using two items. Adolescents are asked: “How far do you think you will go in school?;” and “Do you think you will drop out before graduation from high school?” Responses include the following: “drop out from high school” (.9%); “graduate from high school” (11.7%); “go to a business, technical school or junior college after high school” (11.8%); “graduate from a four year college” (49.4%); and “go to a graduate or professional school” (26.2%). The mean response is quite high, reflecting the expectation to graduate from a four year college. Adolescents are also asked: “What grades did you get in school this year?” “Would you say: mostly A’s” (11%); “mixed A’s and B’s” (24.9%); “mostly B’s” (7.8%); “mixed B’s and C’s” (24.3%); “mostly C’s” (9.6%); “mixed C’s and D’s” (12.6%); “mostly D’s” (3.1%); “mixed D’s and F’s” (4.2%); and “mostly F’s” (2.5%). The mean value on grades earned in school is “mixed B’s and C’s.”

Adolescents’ risk behavior is measured with an indicator of juvenile delinquency. We used separate measures of alcohol and drug use but selected a more parsimonious model. Juvenile delinquency is composed of eight items, asking the frequency that respondents engaged in a series of delinquent acts over the past 12 months including, carrying a hidden weapon other than a plain pocket knife, stealing or trying to steal things worth \$5 or less, deliberately damaging or destroying property, attacking someone with the idea of seriously hurting him/her, stealing or trying to steal something worth more than \$50, breaking into a building or vehicle (or trying to break in) to steal something or just look around, using or threatening to use a weapon to get something from someone, selling drugs, or being drunk in a public place. Responses, scored

such that 1=never and 9=more than once a day, are summed and the scores range from 8 to 72. The delinquency measure has a high Cronbach alpha reliability of .86 and a mean of 9.4.

Intergenerational processes include social modeling, parents' traditional beliefs, and socioeconomic status. Parents' current cohabitation status is measured with two questions. The first is based on the household roster where the mother indicated household member's relationship to the focal child. Also parents are asked about their current living circumstances, "Are you currently: single, cohabiting (living with someone), married." Parents who indicated they are cohabiting in the household roster or with the direct question are categorized as cohabiting. The child's family status is divided into the following five categories: two biological parent (47%); married stepparent (16%); cohabiting stepparent (7%), single (26%); and other (4%). Originally we included parents' marital history in the model but this was not related to expectations to marry or cohabit so it was removed to maintain a more parsimonious model.

Parents' traditionalism is measured with a series of questions that ask about communication with adolescents' regarding sexual issues. This measure not only informs us about the parents' belief but whether this belief was shared with the child. Parents are asked: "How often have you talked to your child about each of the following reasons for not having sexual intercourse at this time in his/her life? We are not interested in whether you agree or disagree, but rather how often you have talked about it with your child." I have talked to my child about: "getting a bad reputation among his/her friends after having sex;" "his/her boy/girlfriend losing respect for her/him after having sex;" "how premarital sex is against your religious beliefs;" "possibly getting (someone) pregnant;" and "not being emotionally mature enough to engage in a sexual relationship." The responses range from 1 to 5 and include "never," "hardly ever," "sometimes," "often," and "very often." The replies are averaged. The

alpha reliability for this measure is .87. We also measure parents' traditionalism with a measure of religiosity, however, this variable was too closely correlated with the adolescent's report of religiosity to be included in the final models.

Parents' socioeconomic circumstance is determined by parental income and mother's education. Parental income is the sum of the mother's and father's reported income. The response categories for mother's and father's income are based on \$10,000 income ranges so estimates are not precise. The mean parental income is \$50,000-60,000. The range for this variable is less than \$10,000 to over \$150,000. Mothers' education is coded as less than 12 years of schooling, 12 years of schooling, and more than 12 years of education. About half (57%) of the respondents have mothers with more than 12 years of education.

Demographic variables examined include gender, race/ethnicity, and age. Gender is established in the beginning of the interview and 48.7% are male and 51.3% are female. We divide the respondent's race and ethnicity into four categories: non-Hispanic white (62.4%), non-Hispanic African American (24.6%), Hispanic (11.1%), and 'other' (1.9%). There are not sufficient cases to examine more refined categories of race or ethnicity. Age ranges from 12 to 19 with a mean value of 15. We code age as a continuous variable.

### *Methods*

We use ordinary least squares regression to estimate models predicting expectations to marry and expectations to cohabit. We first present the zero-order or bivariate model. We then test several models that include only the adolescent predictors or only the parent covariates (these models are not shown). We present a final model that includes both the adolescent and parent variables. We discuss in the text how the effects of parent and adolescent factors differ with the addition of other covariates to the model.

We estimate the adolescent's joint union formation expectations using multinomial logistic regression. This is an appropriate strategy given the categorical nature of our dependent variable. We divide union formation expectations into the following four categories: only cohabit, only marry, cohabit and marry, and no union expectations. We select the traditional path to marriage, only marry, as the contrast category. We present the odds of expecting to cohabit and marry versus only marry, only cohabit versus only marry, and not form a union versus only marry. Our discussion focuses on the contrast between the contemporary family formation pathway (cohabitation and marriage) versus the traditional family formation path (only marry).

## **RESULTS**

### *Marriage Expectations*

As shown in Table 1 most (75.6%) of teens probably or definitely expect to marry. It is relatively rare (5%) to not expect to marry sometime in the future. Clearly, with regard to expectations, adolescents are not rejecting marriage as a future union formation option.

Table 2 presents the zero order and multivariate models predicting marriage expectations. In the zero-order and multivariate models teens who are currently dating have higher marriage expectations than teens who have never dated. Model 1 shows that adolescents who are sexually experienced have similar marriage expectations as virgins. Yet, in the multivariate model the effect of being sexually experienced becomes significantly related to marriage expectations. This suppression appears to occur because teens without dating experience have low odds of having had sexual intercourse.

Adolescents' values are related to marriage expectations. In bivariate models teens with more traditional attitudes (wait until marriage for sex and high religiosity) have higher

expectations to marry. Adolescents' traditionalism continues to be positively associated with marriage expectations in the multivariate model.

The risk and resilience indicators are related to marriage expectations. In terms of educational aspirations, we find that teens who receive good grades and expect to go further in school have greater expectations to marry. The educational attainment variables are still positively related to marriage expectations in the multivariate model. Adolescents' risk behaviors are related to marriage expectations in different ways. Teens who are more delinquent have lower marriage expectations in both the bivariate and multivariate models.

The next set of covariates are indicators of parental influence. The first model in Table 2 shows that teenagers living with two biological parent families have greater marriage expectations than teens living with a single parent, cohabiting parent, married stepparent, or in an 'other' family type. In the multivariate model, adolescents living with single and cohabiting parents have lower marriage expectations than those living with two biological parents. The effect of living in a married stepparent family is no longer statistically significant when we include the child characteristics in the model. When we change the reference category for family structure we find that children living with cohabiting stepparents share similar expectations for cohabitation as children living with single parents and lower expectations than children living with married stepparents. This contrast between the married and cohabiting stepparent families is marginally statistically significant at the .10 level in the multivariate model, with teens living in cohabiting stepparent families having lower marriage expectations than teens living with married stepparents (results not shown). Thus, among teens living in stepparent families, those who have married parents have greater expectations for marriage than those living with cohabiting parents.

Parents' traditionalism is not related to their child's marriage expectations in the bivariate or multivariate models. Teenagers from families with higher parental income and education have greater marriage expectations in the bivariate model. In the multivariate model, teens with mothers who have low education levels (less than a high school degree) have significantly lower marriage expectations than their peers with more highly educated mothers. The effect of parent's income is no longer significant in the multivariate model. The income effect is explained by the inclusion of the demographic and family structure variables.

The demographic factors do not always operate in the expected manner. Adolescent's age is not related significantly to marriage expectations in the bivariate or multivariate model. Model 1 shows that girls have higher expectations to marry than boys. The multivariate model shows that gender is no longer related to marriage expectations. The inclusion of the educational attainment variables explains the gender effect: girls earn better grades and expect to pursue more education than boys. In the bivariate model Black and Hispanic teenagers have lower marriage expectations than whites. These findings do not indicate that Black and Hispanic teens do not expect to marry. In fact, 84% of White, 69% of Hispanic, and 58% of Black teens report they "definitely" or "probably" expect to marry in the future. Race/ethnicity continues to be related to marriage expectations in a similar manner in the multivariate model. Thus, the race and ethnicity gap in marriage expectations is not explained by the covariates in the model.

#### *Cohabitation Expectations*

The distribution in Table 1 shows that one-third of the respondents "probably" or "definitely" expect to cohabit and one-quarter report they are "somewhat" likely to cohabit. This suggests that adolescents are open to cohabitation but are not certain about their beliefs. This

ambiguity may exist because of the lack of clarity about or variation in the meaning of cohabitation in our society.

The last two models in Table 2 present bivariate and multivariate regression coefficients predicting adolescents' expectations to cohabit. The adolescent relationship context variables are strong predictors of cohabitation expectations. In both the bivariate and multivariate models, currently dating teens have higher cohabitation expectations than teens who never dated or are not currently dating. We also find as hypothesized, adolescents who are sexually experienced have greater cohabitation expectations than virgins. Thus, net of traditional predictors, teenagers who are involved in dating and sexual relationships report greater expectations to cohabit.

Adolescents' values are related to their expectations to cohabit. In both bivariate and multivariate models teenagers who are traditional in terms of favorable views about waiting for marriage to have sex and greater religiosity report lower cohabitation expectations. Net of parental views, teens own traditional beliefs influence their cohabitation expectations.

The adolescent risk and resilience measures are related to cohabitation expectations and in the opposite direction of marriage expectations. In the bivariate model adolescents who receive better grades and have high educational aspirations have lower cohabitation expectations than their peers. In the multivariate model, teens with higher grades have lower expectations to cohabit. The effect of educational aspirations is not significantly related to cohabitation expectations when teen's grades in school are included in the model. Initially, adolescents who face greater risks (i.e., juvenile delinquency) have the highest cohabitation expectations. The effect of juvenile delinquency is no longer related to cohabitation expectations when academic achievement, dating and sexual experience, and traditionalism variables are added to the model.



Parents' characteristics are related to teens' cohabitation expectations. At the bivariate level, teenagers from single, cohabiting, and married stepparent families have greater expectations to cohabit than teens living with two biological parents. The family structure variables have a different effect in the multivariate model. Adolescents living with married stepparents have greater cohabitation expectations than teens living with two biological parents. In this model living with single or cohabiting parent is not related to cohabitation expectations. No one specific set of variables explains the family structure effect. Both the child and parent characteristics account for the effect of living with cohabiting or single parents. Further analyses reveal that teens living with cohabiting stepparents share similar expectations for future cohabitation as their counterparts living with single mothers or married stepparents.

Our bivariate findings indicate that teenagers who live in families with lower incomes more often expect to cohabit than their counterparts whose parents are economically better off. Also, adolescents with mothers who have higher education levels have lower expectations to cohabit. In the multivariate models, parents' socioeconomic status (education and income) is not related to cohabitation expectations when the adolescents' attitudes and behaviors are included in the model.

In both bivariate and multivariate models teens with more traditional parents less often report expecting to cohabit. Interestingly, this effect persists with the inclusion of the adolescent's own traditional beliefs and religiosity. The strong parental support for marriage may be reflected in the finding that parent's traditionalism does not influence marriage expectations but is related to cohabitation expectations.

The final set of variables included in the models are the demographic indicators. The bivariate findings show that older teens have more positive expectations to cohabit. Yet, the age

effect is reduced to non-significance with the inclusion of the dating and sexual experience variables. Consistent with our expectations, girls have lower expectations to cohabit than boys. Similar to the models predicting marriage expectations, the gender effect is explained by the education variables. We find that race/ethnicity is not related to cohabitation expectations. Given differentials in cohabitation according to race/ethnicity, it is surprising to find no significant effects of race and ethnicity on cohabitation expectations in any of the models.

Taken together, some of the factors that are associated positively with marriage expectations are negatively tied to cohabitation expectations. At the bivariate level age, risk and resilience, family type, and parents' socioeconomic status have opposite influences on marriage and cohabitation expectations. One exception to this pattern is that adolescent dating is related positively to union formation (cohabitation and marriage). Several other covariates are related to one outcome and not the other, suggesting that these union types are not always in opposition to one another.

#### *Cohabitation and Marriage Expectations*

Not all adolescents view cohabitation or marriage as mutually exclusive activities. About half (50.4%) of the respondents expect to follow the contemporary family formation pathway, both cohabit and to marry sometime in the future. We find that two-fifths (37.4%) of teens expect to follow the traditional path of just marrying and not cohabiting. Most respondents (88%) who expect to cohabit also expect to marry, but only three-fifths (57%) of teens who expect to marry also expect to cohabit (results not shown).

We estimate both bivariate and multivariate models predicting combined union formation expectations, but just present the final multivariate model in Table 3. The responses are coded into the following categories: no union, only cohabit, only marry, and both cohabit and marry.

The contrast category is the traditional path, only marry. The first column presents the odds of expecting to cohabit and marry versus expecting to only marry; the second column is the odds of expecting to cohabit versus expecting to only marry; and the third column represents the odds of not expecting to marry versus expecting to only marry. Given the distribution of responses and our substantive emphasis, we focus on the contrast between teens who expect to both cohabit and marry versus teens who expect to just marry and not cohabit. This contrast represents the more contemporary union formation pattern of cohabitation and marriage versus the traditional pattern of marrying without cohabitation.

Teenagers' engagement in dating and sexual activity are tied to their union formation expectations. Adolescents who are currently dating more often expect to cohabit and marry relative to their peers who are not currently dating or have never dated. Similarly, teens who have ever had sex have higher odds of expecting to cohabit and marry as opposed to following the traditional union formation pattern (only marry).

Teens with more traditional views (religiosity and attitudes about sex and marriage) more often expect to only marry rather than expect to pursue any other union formation path. Interestingly, the adolescent's own values are strong predictors net of their parents' traditionalism.

The risk and resilience factors influence teens' union formation expectations. Educational performance and goals are related to union formation expectations. In the zero order models teens who anticipate higher educational attainment and earn higher grades are more likely to expect to follow the traditional pathway (only marry) than any other union formation pattern (results not shown). However, in the multivariate model adolescent academic achievement no longer differentiates between teens who expect to both cohabit and marry and

those who expect to only marry. At the zero-order, teens with higher levels of risk (defined as engaging in juvenile delinquency) have lower odds of expecting to follow the traditional marriage path (results not shown). In the multivariate model the teens' risk behaviors are not related to their union formation expectations. These effects are explained by race, adolescent dating experiences, teen sexual activity, and traditional views.

As shown in Table 3, parent's family structure, income, and traditionalism are generally not related significantly to adolescents' union formation expectations. The zero-order model shows that teens who live with married, biological parents more often expect to just marry than to follow any other union formation pattern (results not shown). These family structure effects are explained by both the parent and child characteristics. Teenagers living with cohabiting parents, single mother and stepparents share similar odds of expecting to cohabit and marry than just to marry.

The indicator of parents' traditionalism is not related to teens' joint cohabitation and marriage expectations in the bivariate or multivariate models. Yet, teens who have traditional parents are marginally ( $p=.06$ ) less likely to expect to cohabit and marry than to just marry.

The zero-order model shows that parental income and mother's education are both associated positively with expecting to only marry versus any of the other union formation patterns (results not shown). The income effect in the multivariate model is explained by the inclusion of race, family structure, and grades in school into the model. Mother's education continues to be related to union formation expectations in the multivariate model. Teens with highly educated mothers more often expect to pursue the traditional path into marriage rather than expecting to both cohabit and marry.

The demographic characteristics are not strong predictors of adolescents' union formation expectations. In the bivariate model older teens are more likely to expect to cohabit and marry than to only marry (results not shown). Yet, the age of the respondent is not related to their union formation expectations in the multivariate model. In both the bivariate and multivariate models boys and girls share similar odds of expecting to just marry versus other union formation patterns. In both zero-order and multivariate models there are no significant racial differences in the odds of expecting to cohabit and marry versus the traditional path, only marry.

Most of the covariates are associated with expectations to follow the contemporary union formation pathway (cohabitation and marriage) versus the traditional pathway (only marriage) at the bivariate level. These results show that few predictors differentiate these union formation decisions in multivariate models. The significant predictors are dating and sexual experience, adolescents' traditionalism, and mothers' education. These are some of the same factors that predict teens' cohabitation expectations (Table 2).

## **DISCUSSION**

Adolescents in our sample express higher expectations to enter marriage than cohabitation. Three-quarters of teenagers report having "definite" or "probable" expectations to marry in the future. Thus, despite increases in divorce, delays in the timing of marriage, and the potential deinstitutionalization of marriage (Cherlin, 2004), adolescents are not rejecting marriage as evidenced by their expectations to marry. These findings suggest that marriage is here to stay. However, some subgroups of adolescents have weaker expectations for marriage, including minority teens, teens who have never dated, teens who possess less traditional beliefs, teens who have poorer educational performance and goals, teens from single and cohabiting parent families, and teens whose mothers are less educated. Thus, efforts aimed at promoting

marriage should consider tracing back to the origins of expectations for marriage and recognize that expectations for behavior develop early in the life course.

Adolescents are less certain about their cohabitation than marriage expectations. There is general support for cohabitation, but a substantial minority (one-quarter) of teens do not “at all” expect to cohabit. The ambivalence toward cohabitation may stem in part from strict traditional values for some teens and for others the lack of institutionalization of cohabitation (Nock, 1995). Our results show that teenagers’ expectations to cohabit are based in part on their interactions with the opposite sex, traditional beliefs, school performance, and parents’ traditionalism.

However, cohabitation and marriage are not typically viewed as independent decisions. The majority of recent first marriages are preceded by cohabitation and our results show that at least half of teenagers have some expectation to both cohabit and marry sometime in the future. The rejection of marriage in the future seems unlikely because very few teenagers reported plans to only cohabit without ever marrying. An implication of these attitudes may be the continued delay in marriage.

Teenagers’ interactions with the opposite sex influence their expectations about both cohabitation and marriage. It is notable that teenagers who are dating and sexually active teens report higher expectations to cohabit as well as to marry. Thus, as teens date and engage in sexual relationships their feelings about cohabitation and marriage may become more salient. They may not necessarily expect to cohabit with or marry their sexual or dating partners, but the experience of dating and sex may heighten their interest in union formation. Moreover, teens who are involved in dating and sexual activity more often expect to cohabit and marry rather than follow the traditional path—only marriage. This finding is somewhat unexpected because dating during adolescence is developmentally appropriate, but at the same time interactions with

the opposite sex are tied to more contemporary adult relationship scripts. Adolescent intimate interactions are clearly important; they matter not of teens' own views, parental views, risk and resilience behaviors, and demographic characteristics. It is likely that these interactions foster feelings of emotional closeness that increase the likelihood of considering a move toward cohabitation. Thus, relationship experiences move the expectations for future decisions away from the abstract or hypothetical level. In fact, couples may have discussed the prospect of marriage or cohabitation as part of their future life together.

Another set of covariates strongly associated with union formation expectations are traditional values. Traditional values are associated negatively with expectations to cohabit and positively associated with marriage expectations. The teens' views toward marriage and their reported religiosity are also positively associated with expecting to follow the traditional path (only marry) rather than the newer union formation pathway (cohabit and marry). It is particularly notable that these relationships between traditionalism and union formation expectations persist when controlling for parents' views and family characteristics.

The findings reported above indicate that many of the same factors associated with *adult* behaviors and attitudes toward cohabitation and marriage influence adolescents' cohabitation and marriage expectations. Thus, the characteristics of teens who expect to cohabit are often mirrored in those who actually cohabit. For example, educational attainment is associated negatively with cohabitation (Bumpass & Lu, 2000). Similarly, we find that teens' academic achievement is associated negatively to their expectations to cohabit. This evidence lends some support to arguments that attribute differences between married and cohabiting adults to selection. If expectations to cohabit or marry directly translate into behavior (e.g. Barber et al.

2002; Cunningham and Thornton 2005), then these results indicate that the selection processes may be operating much earlier in the life course than has been presented in the literature.

Consistent with the literature, African American teens have lower marriage expectations than whites. Based on the behaviors of adults, we expected that African American and Hispanic youth would report stronger cohabitation expectations. However, race/ethnicity is not significantly associated with cohabitation expectations at the bivariate level. These findings suggest that differentials in cohabitation based on race and ethnicity may stem from life course events or structural constraints that impinge on young adults' ability to meet their marriage expectations (Smock & Manning, 2005). This suggests that in some cases expectations may not always be directly tied to union formation patterns.

Even though during adolescence youth are pulling away from their parents, parental views and circumstances nevertheless influence adolescent union formation expectations. This is consistent with Axinn and Thornton's (1993) argument, which stresses the importance of family and intergenerational relations on young adult union formation behavior. Parental family structure influences teens' expectations about cohabitation and marriage. Teens who live outside of the two biological parent family context have lower expectations to marry and higher expectations to cohabit. The parents' cohabitation status influences adolescents' marriage expectations but not their cohabitation expectations. Teens raised in families with greater socioeconomic circumstances have greater marriage expectations and lower cohabitation expectations. Mother's education is associated positively with expecting to follow the traditional path into marriage versus any other family formation pattern. Parents' socialization, measured via traditional attitudes, influences teens' union formation expectations. Parents who communicate more traditional values have teenagers with lower cohabitation expectations.



Thus, parents' influence their teens' via modeling, socialization, and socioeconomic circumstances. These same parenting indicators may be related to adolescents' subsequent union formation behavior. Future work should consider incorporating these indicators of family environment into models of cohabitation.

There are at least three important cautions one must take when extrapolating from these results. First, the study is based in one local area and should be replicated with a larger sample in a national context. This would ensure that these findings were not specific to a single metropolitan area in the Midwest. Second, our measurement of expectations to follow the contemporary family formation pathway (cohabitation and marriage) is based on responses to two separate questions. Future data collections could specifically inquire about how respondents feel about cohabiting and then getting married. Third, expectations are measured at one point in time. Expectations to form unions may be dynamic responding to shifts in relationships with the opposite sex or other changes in early adulthood. Yet, Cunningham and Thornton (2005) find that attitudes toward cohabitation at age 18 are strong predictors of their attitudes at age 31, net of a host of family characteristics and early adulthood predictors.

The findings from this work contribute to our understanding of family formation and family change. Adolescent expectations are reflecting shifts in social norms regarding marriage and cohabitation. Clearly, support for cohabitation does not necessarily mean a rejection of marriage. Future analyses that predict young adult union formation should consider how both adolescent behaviors and attitudes influence union formation decision-making. An important next step is to link how these adolescent expectations are tied to actual union formation behavior.

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**TABLE 1. Percentages, Means, and (Standard Deviations) for Cohabitation and Marital Expectations, and Adolescents' and Parents' Variables**

	Percentages, Means and (S.D.)	
<b><u>Dependent Variables</u></b>		
<b>Marital expectations (range is 1-5)</b>		(1.1)
Not at all	5.4	
A little	6.7	
Somewhat	12.1	
Probably	36.8	
Definitely	38.8	
<b>Cohabitation expectations (range is 1-5)</b>		(1.3)
Not at all	22.7	
A little	20.3	
Somewhat	26.2	
Probably	24.4	
Definitely	8.3	
<b>Combined Union Formation Expectations</b>		
Only marry	37.4	
No union	5.6	
Only cohabit	6.5	
Cohabit and marry	50.4	
<b><u>Independent Variables</u></b>		
Currently dating	44.2%	
Never dated	16.9%	
Not currently dating	38.9%	
<b>Adolescent Sexual Activity</b>		
Not sexually active	68.7%	
Ever had sex	31.3%	
<b>Adolescent Traditional Views</b>		
Sex only if married (range is 1-5)	3.2	(1.3)
Religiosity (range is 1-5)	3.3	(1.2)
<b>Adolescent Risk and Resilience Behaviors</b>		
Juvenile delinquency scale (range is 8-72)	9.4	(4.6)
How far in school (range is 1-5)	3.9	(1.0)
	6.2	(2.1)
<b>Parenting Variables</b>		
Family structure		
Biological parents	47.0%	
Step-parents	16.2%	
Single parent	25.7%	
Cohabiting parent	6.7%	
Other	4.4%	
Parents' Traditionalism (range is 1-5)	3.0	(1.0)
Parents' Income (range is 0-18)	6.6	(4.0)
Mother's Education		
<12 years	12.4	
12 years	30.2	
12+ years	57.4	

**Sociodemographic Background**

Age (12-19)	15.2	(1.7)
Female	51.4%	
Race/Ethnicity		
White	62.4%	
African-American	24.6%	
Hispanic	11.1%	
Other	1.9%	
N	1,293	

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Source: Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study



**TABLE 2. Regression Coefficients Predicting Adolescents' Expectations to Marry and to Cohabit**

	Marital Expectations		Cohabitation Expectations	
	Zero-order	Multivariat	Zero-order	Multivariate
<b>Adolescent Dating</b>				
(Currently dating)				
Never dated	-.40***	-.38***	-.70***	-.46***
Not currently dating	-.05	-.09	-.29***	-.23**
<b>Adolescent Sexual Activity</b>				
(Not sexually active)				
Ever had sex	-.08	.07*	.67***	.33***
<b>Adolescent Traditional Views</b>				
Sex only w/marriage	.11***	.07**	-.25***	-.12***
Religiosity	.09***	.07**	-.17***	-.08**
<b>Adolescent Risk and Resilience Behavior</b>				
How far in school	.28***	.15***	-.12**	.01
Grades this year	.16***	.07***	-.08***	-.04*
Juvenile delinquency scale	-.03***	-.01	.03***	.01
<b>Parenting Variables</b>				
Family Structure				
(Two biological parent)				
Step-parent	-.23**	-.03	.29**	.19*
Single	-.51***	-.23**	.33***	.13
Cohabiting parent	-.62***	-.29*	.33*	.20
Other	-.47**	-.19	-.24	-.43**
Parents' Traditionalism	-.05	-.01	-.09***	-.11***
Parents' Income	.06***	-.00	-.02*	-.002
Mother's Education				
<12 years	-.49**	-.24*	-.01	-.15
(12 years)				
12+ years	.21**	.12	-.17*	-.12
<b>Adolescent Sociodemographics</b>				
Age	.03	.01	.09***	.00
Female	.22***	.09	-.17*	-.02
Race/Ethnicity				
(White)				
African-American	-.69***	-.51***	.07	.08
Hispanic	-.50***	-.25**	.22	.08
Other	-.28	-.28	.19	.36
R <sup>2</sup>		.20		.14
Adj R <sup>2</sup>		.18		.12

<sup>a</sup>Omitted categories in parentheses.

Source: Toledo Adolescent Relationship Study

N=1,293

\*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001

**TABLE 3. Multinomial Coefficients Predicting Marital and Cohabitation Expectations**

	Cohabit & Marry vs. Only Marry	Only Cohabit vs. Only Marry	No Union vs. Only Marry
<b>Adolescent Dating Experiences</b>			
(Currently dating)			
Never dated	-.71***	-.22	.35
Not currently dating	-.38**	-.50	.20
<b>Adolescent Sexual Activity</b>			
(Not sexually active)			
Ever had sex	.61***	-.06	-.15
<b>Adolescents Traditional Views</b>			
Sex only w/marriage	-.16**	-.51***	-.26*
Religiosity	-.17**	-.34**	-.26**
<b>Adolescent Risk &amp; Resilience Behavior</b>			
How far in school	.05	-.34**	-.22
Grades this year	-.04	-.18**	-.16*
Juvenile delinquency scale	.03	.03	-.01
<b>Parenting Variables</b>			
Family Structure			
(Two biological parent)			
Step-parent	.34	.20	.04
Single	.20	.30	.88*
Cohabiting parent	.40	.62	.85
Other	-.56	-.98	.90
Parents' Traditionalism	-.13	-.13	.21
Parents' Income	-.003	.003	.10*
Mother's Education			
<12 years	-.25	.24	-.25
(12 years)			
12+ years	-.39**	-.65*	-.64*
<b>Adolescent Sociodemographics</b>			
Age	-.002	.05	-.05
Female	-.03	-.11	-.29
Race/Ethnicity			
(White)			
African-American	.26	1.40***	1.42***
Hispanic	.02	.72	.72
Other	.93	1.17	2.40***
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	2406.5		

<sup>a</sup>Omitted categories in parentheses.

Source: Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study

N=1,293

\*p ≤ .05, \*\*p ≤ .01, \*\*\*p ≤ .001