Parent-Child Relationships in the Transition to Adulthood: An Examination of Children's and Parents Reports by Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Socioeconomic Status from 1994-2018

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Abstract

Parent-child relationships are increasingly central in family life due to the delaying transition to adulthood. Using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) and the Add Health Parent Study from 1994-2018, we examine changes in parent-child relationships reported from the child and the parent across gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status in the transition to adulthood from ages 12-43 years old. We examine four broad categories of parent-child relationships: emotional support, communication, instrumental, and financial support. For the overall sample, parent-child closeness remains high but decreases from ages 12-43. By gender, we find that daughters report lower relationship quality with their mothers and fathers in adolescence. By race and ethnicity, we find that parent-child closeness is highest among Black adolescents and adults. By socioeconomic status, we find that respondents whose mothers attained less than a high school degree report the greatest mother-child closeness. Respondents who grew up with a mother who had a college degree or more were more likely to receive financial and instrumental support in adulthood. Parents (ages 47-80) also report providing more instrumental and financial support to their adult children (ages 34-43) than vice versa. Overall, parents remain an important source of emotional, instrumental, and financial support in the transition to adulthood, especially for Black and low SES adolescents. This encourages research to focus more on the parent-child relationship in the transition to adulthood and pay attention to the intersectional nature of the parent-child relationship with regards to timing of the life course and race, ethnicity, gender, and SES.

Introduction

The delaying transition to adulthood is marked by several key demographic changes. Young adults are finishing school later, are more likely to live with their parents as they age, and are less likely to find stable, long-term jobs (Furstenberg, 2010). Due to the growing period of uncertainty among young adults, children are more likely to be dependent on their parents for emotional, instrumental, and financial support compared to previous decades (Fingerman, Cheng, Tighe, Birditt, & Zarit, 2012). Parent-child relationships may be marked with challenges and conflict as young adults navigate normative expectations on the timing of leaving the parental home, finishing schooling, and experience transitions in and out of romantic relationships and jobs (Schulenberg & Schoon, 2012). Moreover, increasing racial and ethnic diversity and growing economic inequality in the United States (Lichter, 2013) serve as important contexts to consider a descriptive portrait of parent-child relationships over the life course. Given the increasing life span of parents, a substantial proportion of the parent-child relationship will be experienced beyond childhood and adolescence (Swartz, 2009). Given the numerous changes to the timing of transitions to adulthood and the nature of parent-child relationships, it is critical to understand descriptively how these relationships vary by gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

In this study, we aim to descriptively explore parent-child relationships over the life course from adolescence to adulthood. We explore parent-child emotional support, satisfaction with communication, and financial support across gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status from adolescence to adulthood accounting for the perspectives of both the child and parent. Using the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) and the Add Health Parent Study, we rely on life course (Elder, 1998), intergenerational solidarity (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991), and intergenerational stake (Bengtson & Kuypers, 1971) theories to

investigate whether parent-child relationships improve, worsen, or remain stable over the life course.

Understanding the role of parent-child relationships in the transition to adulthood from both the child and parent's perspectives contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it provides a descriptive understanding of parent-child relationships that are measured at various timepoints over the life course from adolescence to adulthood, rather than retrospective reports of parent-child relationships asked at one point in time, for more accurate reports of parent-child relationships (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). Second, it captures racially and ethnically diverse trends of parent-child relationships for a nationally representative, longitudinal sample to assess dimensions of parent-child relationships among white, Black, Latinx, and Asian respondents. Finally, it examines aspects of parent-child relationships from both the child and parent's perspective during adolescence and adulthood, to examine whether parents' and children's reports of their relationships are similar or diverge.

Overall, we find that the parent-child relationship remains an important source of emotional, instrumental, and financial support from adolescence to adulthood. We also find that patterns of parental support vary across race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. Specifically, we find that maternal closeness is highest among Black adolescents and adults, while Asian parents report providing the highest levels of instrumental and financial support. Finally, similar to prior work (Schoeni & Ross, 2005), we find that patterns of exchange remain unequal over the life course, with parents providing more instrumental support than children provide to parents.

Background: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Our study is motivated by three theoretical frameworks: life course theory (Elder, 1998), intergenerational solidarity theory (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991), and the intergenerational stake hypothesis (Bengtson & Kuypers, 1971). In the life course theory, events, transitions, and trajectories define life pathways for individuals within and across developmental stages (Elder, 1998). The principles that guide the life course approach include the principle of life-span development, agency, time and place, timing, and linked lives (Elder, 1998). We use the principle of linked lives and expect that parent-child relationships are dynamic, interdependent, and change over the life course. In the principle of linked lives, shared relationships, such as with children and parents, and social contexts shape individual lives. Relationships with parents, as well as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, shape the parent-child relationship.

We descriptively examine the following aspects of intergenerational solidarity: affectual, associational, and functional solidarity (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991) over five time points from adolescence to adulthood. Affectual solidarity includes positive feelings towards other family members. Associational solidarity includes communication quality between parents and children, while functional solidarity includes financial support. We measure parent-child closeness, emotional support, satisfaction with communication, and financial support provided and received from parents to children across race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status.

In the intergenerational stake hypothesis, parents are more invested in their children than children are invested in their parents, with the fundamental source of conflict in this relationship being parents' fear of discontinued relationships with children and children's desire for individuation from parents (Bengtson & Kuypers, 1971). We therefore expect parents to report higher levels of emotional support, instrumental support, and financial support given to children than vice versa.

Changes in Parent-child Relationships from Adolescence to Adulthood

It is important to ground our work in an understanding of what we already know about parent-child relationships, which is primarily from retrospective reports and research on the parent-child relationship in adolescence. As children age and parents and children start sharing more interests in common, parent-child relationships generally improve (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). Parent-child relationships in adolescence tend to be characterized by conflict, as adolescents search for autonomy from their parents (Longmore, Manning, & Giordano, 2013). In adulthood, however, most adult children report positive and close relationships with their parents (Bengtson & Kuypers, 1971; Swartz, 2009; Thornton, Orbuch, & Axinn, 1995; Umberson, 1992). Parents tend to report closer relationships to their children than children report to their parents (Bengtson & Kuypers, 1971), but whether reports of parent-child closeness has been shaped by the delayed transition to adulthood, however, is unknown. Parent-child closeness is an important domain to study because of its links to adolescent and young adult health and wellbeing (Umberson, Crosnoe, & Reczek, 2010).

In addition to tracing parent-child closeness, much of the research on parent-child relationships traces the satisfaction both parents and children have with parent-child communication. Those families with high parent-child communication have been shown to be closer and have higher satisfaction with family functioning (Barnes & Olson, 1985; Currie & Levin, 2010). Research on family communication and functioning also point to a complex understanding of the "kinscripts," or social and emotional upkeep expected and negotiated within families (Stack & Burton, 1993). This points to the importance of understanding multiple perspectives of the parent-child relationship and how it changes over time, about which we know little.

Financial support generally flows from parents to children (McGarry & Schoeni, 1997), and offered to children when help is actually needed (Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997). Children also receive more financial support if they were perceived to be more successful than other members of their family (Fingerman, Miller, Birditt, & Zarit, 2009). Financial support may be greater from parents to children in adolescence and decline as children age into adulthood and enter the labor market.

Differences in Parent-child Relationships by Race, Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, and Gender

There is variation in parent-child relationships across race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status with regards to parent-child closeness, emotional support, living arrangements, and financial support. Prior studies have found mixed results with regards to racial and ethnicity. Black adolescents and adults reported the highest maternal closeness relative to those from other racial and ethnic backgrounds (Hardie & Seltzer, 2016; Zhang & Sassler, In Press). In adolescence, maternal closeness was highest among Black adolescents, followed by Latinx, white, and Asian adolescents (Zhang & Sassler, In Press). However, Hardie and Seltzer find that Black and Latinx young adults reported less emotional support from their parents relative to white young adults using the NLSY79 (2016). Whether these patterns persist across race and ethnicity from adolescence into adulthood, however, is unknown.

Other factors, like the gender of the parent and child, may impact relationships between parents and children. Relationship quality between mothers and children tends to be higher compared to relationship quality between fathers and children (Shearer, Crouter, & McHale, 2005). Research shows that the gendered nature of the parent-child relationship begins at a young age, with parental affection greater for girls and discipline more salient for boys (Hughes, Deater-Deckard, & Cutting, 1999). Mothers may provide more constructive interaction with

children of any gender, while fathers are more likely to be involved with sons with a focus on discipline and instrumental support (Starrels, 1994). In young adulthood, women report greater parental control than men with regards to curfew and activities outside of the home, which may lead to greater parental conflict between parents and daughters and less closeness (Sassler, Ciambrone, & Benway, 2008). In sum, research shows that gender shapes the functioning and form of parent-child relationships from childhood to adulthood. Family instrumental functioning may also differ by gender, as research has found that girls on average may spend more time performing household labor in adolescence than boys, and even more in low-income families (Manke, Seery, Crouter, & McHale, 1994; White & Brinkerhoff, 1981). There is also little research on differences in monetary support by gender, though some work has found that sons may expect more monetary support from their mothers than do daughters (Goldscheider, Thornton, & Yang, 2001). Our study extends prior work by examining whether gender differences of parent-child relationships persist from adolescence to adulthood.

Research has shown that the flow of support may differ in low-income families. For example, qualitative work in central city Philadelphia with white low-income young adults show that low-SES children provide financial, home maintenance, and caregiving support to families during the transition to adulthood (Napolitano, 2015). Swartz's qualitative research has found that socioeconomic status significantly predicts flows of support between parents and children during the transition to adulthood, with high-SES parents providing greater financial support for their children's living expenses, higher education, and insurance compared to low-SES parents (2008). Whether socioeconomic status shapes emotional support and closeness, however, is unknown.

Racial and ethnic differences in parent-child relationships continue within socioeconomic statuses. Patterns of parents providing financial support to their children are driven by financial

resources available within the family (Berry, 2006). Families with greater socioeconomic status may be able to provide greater financial support to their children relative to families with lower socioeconomic status (Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2004), and often provide funds for higher education, housing, and living expenses (Semyonov & Lewin-Epstein, 2001). While parents from high socioeconomic backgrounds may be more likely to contribute larger sums of monetary support to their children, parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to contribute their time towards childcare, transportation, shared living, and may provide smaller sums of monetary support (Schoeni & Ross, 2005; Swartz, 2008). Black and Latinx young adults reported receiving less financial support from their parents relative to white young adults (Hardie & Seltzer, 2016).

Hypotheses

Based on the literature, we expect the following hypotheses:

1. We expect parent-child closeness and emotional support to improve over time as adolescents transition to adulthood, and as children become more like their adult parents (Rossi & Rossi, 1990).
2. We expect reports of parent-child closeness to vary by race and ethnicity, with greater parent-child closeness and emotional support among Black and Latinx adolescents and young adults compared to white and Asian adolescents and young adults (Hardie & Seltzer, 2016; Zhang & Sassler, 2019).
3. We expect parent-child relationships to vary by gender, with reports of maternal closeness being higher than paternal closeness (Shearer et al., 2005).
4. We expect that parent-child relationships will vary by socioeconomic status, with financial support from parents being greater among respondents who have a higher SES (Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2004).

5. We expect reports of emotional support, instrumental support, and financial support provided to be higher among parents than reports of children's emotional, instrumental, and financial support provided to parents (Bengtson & Kuypers, 1971).

Data and Methods

We use data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) a school-based sample of adolescents who were in the 7th – 12th grades from 1994-1995, and re-interviewed until they were ages 32-43 years old in 2016-2018 (https://cpc.unc.edu/projects/addhealth). We use data from Waves I, II, III, IV, and the Wave V pre-sample to capture dimensions of parent-child relationships from adolescence to adulthood. In Wave I, 20,745 adolescents completed the survey, followed by 14,738 respondents in the 8th – 12th grades in 1995-1996 in Wave II, 15,197 respondents from 2001-2002 in Wave III, 15,701 respondents from 2008-2009 in Wave IV, and 3,872 respondents in the Wave V pre-sample from 2016-2018. We limited our sample to respondents who completed all five survey waves to capture changing dimensions of parent-child relationships over time, which led to a reduced sample size of 2,401 respondents. We included respondents who did not have missing survey weights for Wave V, which led to a decreased sample size of 2,267 observations. We limited our sample to respondents who were white, Black, Latinx, and Asian, due to small sample sizes for American Indian and other groups, thus reducing the sample to 2,232. We did not include respondents with missing data on their mother's educational attainment, decreasing the sample size to 2,151.

For now, we have not included respondents with missing data on the parent-child relationship measures across all five waves because the respondent lived alone or in an institution at the time of interview (Harris et al., 2009). As a result, the sample dataset is more white, higher SES, and contains more two-biological parent family structures. We created

separate samples for those who responded to the questions about maternal and paternal relationships, because these were two distinct samples; 85% of respondents who completed the paternal sample grew up in two-biological parent family structures in Wave I, compared to 66% of the maternal sample respondents. Due to our decision to not include respondents who had missing data on parent-child relationship measures across the 5 waves, the sample size was reduced to 1,780 for the maternal sample and 1,232 for the paternal sample, which made the sample more white and of higher socioeconomic background relative to the original Add Health sample.

We also use data from the Add Health Parent Study (AHPS), which interviewed the parents of the original Add Health respondents at Wave I in 1994-1995 and Wave II from 2016-2017. In Wave I of the AHPS, 17,670 parents of the original Add Health respondents were interviewed and were ages 27-67 years old. In Wave II of the AHPS, 2,247 parents were interviewed and were ages 47-80 years old. A majority of the sample were women, as Add Health explicitly gave instructions to interviewers to give the Parent Questionnaire to a female member of the household (Add Health, 1994). We also restricted the sample to respondents who did not have missing data on age (n=38), parental education (n=13), and dropped respondents who were not white, Black, Latinx, or Asian (n=55), reducing the sample size to 2,141 respondents. Our sample sizes varied depending on missing data for certain measures of parent-child relationships for our descriptive statistics.

For now, we have not imputed the missing data given that the respondents' reports of their relationships with their mothers and fathers were only answered if the respondent did not live alone or in an institution. Given that this data was not missing completely at random, we did not find it appropriate to use multiple imputation to account for the missing reports of relationships with mothers and fathers, because the results would be biased (Allison, 2009).

Method

In order to assess changes in parent-child relationships over time, we took survey-weighted means of key dimensions of parent-child relationships across gender, race, ethnicity, and maternal education for the children's sample as well as the parent's sample. We ran Bonferroni corrections to assess whether the weighted means varied significantly within gender, race and ethnicity, as well as socioeconomic status at the $p<0.05$-level.

Measures

We broadly capture three dimensions of parent-child relationships: emotional support, frequency of communication, and financial support.

Demographic Variables

We examine parent-child relationships by gender, race and ethnicity, and maternal education, all of which were measured in Wave I. For children's reports, gender was whether the respondent was male or female. The respondent's race and ethnicity included four exclusive categories: white, Black, Latinx, and Asian, from the constructed race variable used in Wave I (Udry, Li, & Hendrickson-Smith, 2003), and from Wave I of the Add Health Parent Study. We used maternal education as a proxy for socioeconomic status, from the respondent's and parent's reports of their mother's and their own highest educational attainment in Wave I, which included the categories of less than high school, high school/GED, some college, college and more, and don't know.

Children's Reports of Parent-Child Relationships

Emotional Support

Emotional support is measured through the respondent's reported closeness with their mother, and reported closeness with their father asked in Waves I, II, III, IV, and V: "how close do you feel to your [mother figure]?" and "how close do you feel to your [father figure]?" This

could include a biological parent, adoptive parent, step parent, or foster parent. In Wave III only, the respondent was asked the question separately for each biological parent, previously residential parent, and current residential parent. We averaged the responses for these questions to come up with an overall measure of closeness for the mother and father in Wave III. Responses ranged from 1 (not close at all) to 5 (extremely close).

Satisfaction with Communication

Due to inconsistent measures of communication across the five waves, we included one broad measure of communication: satisfaction with communication with the mother or father in Waves I, II, and IV. Satisfaction with communication within the relationship came from the following question: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? You are satisfied with the way your mother and you communicate with each other." The same was asked of the respondent's father. Responses ranged from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5), and were *reverse-coded.*

Financial Support

Due to inconsistency on financial measures across the waves, we included various measures of financial support from parents, including (i) allowance, (ii) whether the parent provided money, and (iii) whether the parent provided money for living expenses. In Waves I and II, respondents were asked about their allowance: "How much is your allowance each week? If you don't receive your allowance weekly, how much would it be each week?" Responses ranged from $0 to $95. In Wave III, the measure of parental financial support came from the following question: "Has your mother given you any money or paid for anything significant for you during the past 12 months? Don't include regular birthday or holiday gifts." Responses from the previous residential, current residential, and biological mother were averaged. The same question was asked for fathers, which was also averaged. The responses on financial support

received from mothers and fathers were averaged to create a broad measure of whether the respondent received any financial support from any parent. Responses ranged from no to yes. In Wave IV, the following questions were asked separately for the mother figure and the father figure: "How many times has your parent paid your living expenses or given you $50 or more to pay living expenses during the past 12 months?" Answers ranged from 0 (never), 1 (yes), 2 (one to two times), to 3 (three to four times). In Wave V, the same question was asked, but only for a parent or parent figure, and responses ranged from 0 (never), 1 (one or two times), 3 (three or four times), and 4 (5 or more times). Due to inconsistent response categories across the waves, we created a broad, dichotomous measure of whether the child reported receiving any financial support from their parent(s), ranging from no to yes.

Parents' Reports of Parent-Child Relationships

We include various measures of parent's reports of their relationships with their children, including emotional support, instrumental support, and financial support, using Waves I and II of the Add Health Parent Study.

Emotional Support

In Wave I, aspects of emotional support came from the following four items, which were scaled to create a combined measure of parent-child relationship quality ($\alpha = 0.73$) (Johnson, 2013): whether the respondent could get along well with their son or daughter, make decisions about the son or daughter's life together, feels like they can really trust their son or daughter, and whether the parent is satisfied with the relationship with their son or daughter. Responses ranged from 1 (always) to 5 (never) except for the question on relationship satisfaction, which ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) and were reverse-coded to indicate higher levels of support for higher scores.

In Wave II, emotional support came from the following yes-no questions asked in Wave II, summed into an overall measure of emotional support from children: whether the parent could open up to them if they needed to talk about their worries, whether they could rely on help if they had a problem, and whether they made too many demands or criticized them, which was reverse-coded. Responses ranged from 0 (no support) to 3 (full support).

Instrumental Support

Instrumental support given and received from children came from the following question asked in Wave II or the Add Parent Study: "In the past 12 months, did you [or your spouse/partner] spend time helping one or more of your [spouse/partner's] children?" This included helping with activities such as child care, errands, transportation, chores, or hands-on care. Instrumental support received from children was whether the spouse or partner's children helped the parent or spouse with activities such as errands, transportation chores, or hands-on care in the past 12 months. Responses for both questions ranged from no to yes.

Financial Support

Financial support given to and received from children came from the following yes-no questions asked in Wave II: "In the past 12 months, did you [or your spouse/partner] give any money, personal loans, or gifts of $100 or more to one of your [or your spouse/partner's] children?" The same question was asked of whether the parent received money from their children in Wave II.

Summary Statistics

Table 1 shows summary statistics for the mother sample, father sample, and parent sample. Slightly over half of the sample was female for the mother and father samples, while 96% of the parent sample was female. A majority of the sample was white (72% for the mother sample, 77% for the father sample, and 74% for the parent sample), followed by Black (13% for

the mother sample, 9% for the father sample, and 13% for the parent sample), Latinx (12% of the mother sample, 11% of the father sample, and 11% of the parent sample) and Asian (3% of the mother sample, 4% of the father sample, and 2% of the parent sample). The average age of the respondent was approximately 15 years old in Wave I, followed by 16 years old in Wave II, 22 years old in Wave III, 28 years old in Wave IV, and 37 years old in Wave V. For the parent sample, the average age of the respondent's parent was 41 years old in Wave I, and 63 years old in Wave II. Most respondents had mothers who completed a high school degree across the samples.

Contrary to what we expected in Hypothesis 1, parent-child closeness generally decreased from adolescence to adulthood. Reported maternal closeness was highest in Wave IV (ages 25 to 34), followed by Wave I (ages 12-21), Wave II (ages 14-22), Wave III (ages 19-27) and was lowest in Wave V (ages 34-43). Paternal closeness, on the other hand, was highest in adolescence at ages 12-21, followed by adulthood at ages 25 to 34, emerging adulthood at ages 19-27, adolescence from ages 14-22, and adulthood at ages 34 to 43. Parents' relationship quality with their adolescent children was also relatively high, at 4.19 out of 5. Satisfaction with communication with the mother and father increased from Waves I (ages 12-21) to IV (ages 25-34) and was lowest in Wave II (ages 13-20).

Instrumental support provided and received from children was unequal, with parents providing more instrumental support than children from 2016-2018. A majority of parents, 87%, reported helping their children with tasks such as chores and transportation in the past year, while 68% of parents reported that they received help from their children in the past year. Financial assistance provided from parents decreased over the life course, with parental financial assistance being highest in Wave III when respondents were 19-27 years old (70%), followed by adolescence when adolescents reported receiving allowance in Waves I and II (52% and 48%),

followed by Wave IV (38%) and V (25%). Financial assistance provided to children, reported from parents, was greater than the amount of financial support received from children – 65% of parents reported giving gifts or money valued at $100 or more to their children, while 33% of parents reported receiving gifts of money valued at $100 or more from their children.

We examined parent-child relationships across gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status in order to assess for which groups parent-child relationships were more important for than others.

Parent-Child Relationships across Gender

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics of parent-child relationships by gender. Overall, maternal closeness was significantly lower among adolescent girls compared to adolescent boys. Across the life course, however, the only significant difference in reported closeness by gender was in Wave I, when respondents were 15 years old on average. Reported paternal closeness was significantly lower among daughters compared to sons in Waves I, II, and III, but not significantly different in young adulthood and adulthood, providing partial support for Hypothesis 2, that parent-child relationships would be higher among father-son dyads relative to father-daughter dyads. Satisfaction with communication with the respondent's mother and father was significantly lower among adolescent girls compared to adolescent boys. From the Add Health Parent Study, there were no statistically significant differences in reports of parents' relationship quality with their adolescent children by gender. Similarly, in Wave II, there were no significant differences in the levels of emotional support the parent provided to the child.

There were no differences in reported financial support received from parents among men and women from Wave I to V. However, with regards to instrumental support provided and financial support provided given in the Add Health Parent Study, there were gender differences, with female parents reporting they received more financial support from their children than male

parents. In addition, among the parent sample, a greater proportion of women stated that they received help from a child (69%) than men (58%) in the past year.

In sum, the three primary descriptive findings that emerge examining parent-child relationships by gender are the following: parent-child closeness and relationship satisfaction are lower among girls than boys; children provide more instrumental and financial support to their female parental figures; and there were no differences found for financial support received by gender.

Parent-Child Relationships across Race and Ethnicity

Table 3 shows reports of parent-child relationships across race and ethnicity. Overall, we found that maternal closeness was significantly higher among Black respondents relative to white respondents, and that these differences were significantly different from white respondents from Wave II to Wave V. Therefore, we did not find support for Hypothesis 3, that parental emotional support was higher among whites compared to other racial and ethnic minority respondents. Maternal closeness was also lowest among Asians, but these differences were not statistically significantly different from whites except for in Wave III. Paternal closeness, on the other hand, was significantly higher among Black adults in Wave IV relative to white adults, and was significantly higher among Latinx adults relative to white adults in Wave V. Parents' reports of their relationship quality with their children and satisfaction of their relationship with their child showed that Black parents reported the lowest relationship quality with their children in Wave I relative to white, Latinx, and Asian parents. Asian and Latinx parents reported the highest relationship quality with their children in adolescence, which was statistically significantly higher from white and Black parents' reports of their relationship quality with their children. Emotional support in Wave II, however, was relatively high for parents and did not significantly vary by racial and ethnic group.

Satisfaction with communication with the mother was significantly higher among Black adults compared to white adults, while there were no statistically significant racial and ethnic differences for satisfaction with communication with the father. There were no racial and ethnic differences in parents' reports of emotional support from the child in Wave II.

From the Add Health Parent Study, instrumental support provided and received varied across racial and ethnic groups. Asian parents provided the most help to their children in Wave V (96%), followed by white (90%), Black (86%), and Latinx (67%) parents. Patterns of exchange were unequal, with children providing less help to their parents than parents provided to their children. Asian parents reported that they received the most help from their children (80%), followed by 76% of Black, 57% of Latinx, and 68% of white parents.

Parental financial assistance also varied across racial and ethnic groups – Black adults reported receiving the greatest levels of financial support from parents in Waves IV and V, and this was statistically significantly higher relative to white adults. From the Add Health Parent Study, parents' reports of how much money was provided and received varied across race and ethnicity. Asian parents provided the most financial support (81%), followed by white (68%), Black (61%), and Latinx (44%) parents. Similarly, the amount of money parents received from children was not equal to the amount of money parents gave to children. Over half (55%) of Black parents received any money from their child in the past year, followed by 51% of Asian parents, 38% of Latinx parents, and 28% of white parents.

In sum, the primary findings from this table show that maternal closeness, paternal closeness, and satisfaction with communication with the mother are consistently higher among Black young adults; that Asian parents are the most satisfied with their relationship with their children, and that Black, Latinx, and Asian children gave the most money to their parents in adulthood.

Parent-Child Relationships across Socioeconomic Status

Table 4 shows reports of parent-child relationships across maternal education. Generally, maternal emotional support was highest among respondents who had less than a high school degree, and these differences were especially apparent in adolescence in Wave II. Respondents whose mothers had less than a high school degree were significantly more likely to report greater maternal closeness relative to those who had a high school, some college, college or more, and didn't know their mother's education. In Wave III, relative to respondents whose mothers had less than a high school degree, respondents whose mothers had some college reported lower maternal closeness. In Wave I, parents' reported relationship quality with children was significantly higher among respondents whose mothers had a college degree or more, relative to respondents whose mothers had a high school degree and some college degree. In Wave II of the Add Health Parent Study, there were no statistically significant differences in reports of emotional support across socioeconomic status.

Satisfaction with communication with the mother was highest among respondents whose mothers had less than a high school degree in Wave II but was highest among respondents who had a college degree or more in Wave IV. There were no statistically significant differences in satisfaction with communication with the father in Waves I, II, and IV.

Instrumental support provided and received from adult children to their aging parents varied by socioeconomic status. Approximately 92% of parents who had a college or more degree reported helping their parents in the past year in Wave V, followed by 87% of parents who completed some college, 86% who completed a high school degree, and 80% who had less than a high school degree. Parents who completed some college and college and more were significantly more likely to have helped children in the past year relative to parents who completed less than a high school degree, parents who completed a high school degree, and

parents who completed some college. Parents did not report receiving the same level of instrumental help from their children as children received from their parents, providing partial support for Hypothesis 5. Approximately 68% of parents who completed less than a high school degree and high school degree, 67% of mothers who completed some college, and 71% of parents who completed a college degree or more reported that they received help from their children in the past year when interviewed from 2016-2018. There were no significant differences across socioeconomic status in whether parents reported that their children helped them in the past year.

Generally, financial support declined from adolescence to adulthood, and was highest in Wave III during the ages of 19-27 years old. Parental financial assistance was significantly higher among respondents whose mothers completed some college relative to those whose mothers had less than a high school degree in Waves III and IV, providing support for Hypothesis 4, that higher-SES parents would provide more money to their children than low-SES parents. Finally, there was variation in the patterns of providing and receiving financial support from the parents' perspective. In the Add Health Parent Study, a greater proportion of parents who had increasing levels of parental education provided more financial support to their adult children. While 40% of parents who had less than a high school degree gave any money to their children in Wave V, 61% of those who had a high school degree, followed by 66% of those who had some college degree, and 84% of those who had a college degree or more provided any financial support to their parent in Wave V. Patterns of financial exchange were not reciprocal, with parents providing more financial support than children, providing partial support for Hypothesis 5. Parents reported receiving less money from their children than children received from their parents across socioeconomic statuses, and there were no significant differences across these socioeconomic categories. Approximately 32% of parents with less than a high

school degree, followed by 33% of those with a high school degree, 31% of those with some college, and 38% of those with a college degree or more reported receiving any money from their children in the past year from 2016-2018.

In sum, the three primary points that descriptive results are that maternal closeness and satisfaction with communication with mothers are highest among low-SES adolescent children; that parents' relationship quality with children are highest among parents who have a college degree or more in adolescence; and that high-SES parents give the most instrumental support and financial support to their children in adulthood.

Conclusion

In the context of the delaying transition to adulthood, parents are an important source of emotional, instrumental, and financial support. However, it is not known whether and how parent-child relationships change over the life course. We aimed to address this gap in the literature by descriptively examining changes in parent-child relationships from adolescence to adulthood from 1994-2018, and examining differences by gender, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Our study gleaned three important themes: that parent-child relationships remain an important source of emotional, financial, and instrumental support from adolescence to adulthood; that important differences in patterns of support in parent-child relationships exist across race ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status; and that parents provide more instrumental and financial support to children than children provide to parents, even in adulthood.

The first theme that emerged from this study is that parents remain an important source of emotional, instrumental, and financial support from adolescence to adulthood, and that patterns of support varied across race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Although parent-child closeness slightly decreased from adolescence to adulthood, most respondents felt either very

close or extremely close to their parents from ages 12-43 years old. Black adolescents and adults reported being the closest to their mothers. In addition, parents provided a substantial amount of instrumental and financial support to their adult children – 87% of parents ages 47-80 years old reported providing help (child care, chores, transportation, and hands-on care) to the adult child ages 32-43 years old in the past year, and 65% of parents provided financial support of at least $100 or more to their adult children in the past year. By race and ethnicity, Asian parents provided the highest levels of financial and instrumental support to their children. By socioeconomic status, respondents whose mothers completed college or more reported receiving the highest levels of instrumental support and financial support. This finding reinforces that parent-child relationships continue to matter beyond adolescence (Moretti & Peled, 2004). Future work should consider the impact of parent-child relationships on young adult and adult children's well-being across the life course, given that parents remain an important source of social support throughout the lifespan.

The second theme is that important variation in parent-child relationships exists across gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Specifically, parents remain an important source of emotional support for adolescent boys, low-SES adolescents, and Black adolescents and young adults. These results have important implications for the understanding of what constitutes "good" parenting in the United States. Given that much of the parenting literature has focused on how parenting styles vary across gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (Lareau, 2003; Pezzella, Thornberry, & Smith, 2016), this descriptive finding sheds light on the importance of considering emotional support as an important domain of the parent-child relationship, and to consider that parents are an important source of support for low-SES and Black adolescents and young adults. The importance of emotional support from parents, in turn, may shape trajectories of well-being across the life course beyond adolescence. On the other

hand, parents remain an important source of instrumental and financial support for high-SES adolescents and adults, even into adulthood, thus perpetuating intergenerational inequality. Given that a greater proportion of high-SES adults receive money from their parents relative to low-SES adults, future work should examine how greater economic support may shape adult well-being during transitions to adulthood across the life course, and how these outcomes vary by socioeconomic status.

The third theme is that parents report providing more support to children than children provide to parents, confirming the Intergenerational Stake Hypothesis (Bengtson & Kuypers, 1971). In this study, while 65% of parents provided money to adult children in Wave V, only 33% had received money from adult children in Wave V. In addition, while 87% of aging parents provided instrumental help to their children in Wave V, only 68% of these same parents reported receiving help from their adult children in Wave V. The greater amount of financial support provided from aging parents to their adult children may have implications for understanding whether aging parents experience greater financial strain as they reach retirement ages as they continue to financially support their children (Schoeni & Ross, 2005), and whether their children can serve as a source of financial support during this time period. This has implications for addressing the social safety net for aging parents in the U.S., as children cannot necessarily provide financial support to their parents due to rising levels of debt (Addo, 2014). Future work should take into consideration how unequal exchanges of financial support may shape both adults and their aging parents' wellbeing.

Although this paper illuminated important details in understanding the transition to adulthood, it was not free from limitations. We only examined respondents who reported having all five measures of maternal closeness and all five measures of paternal closeness, thus excluding mothers and fathers who died along the way. In addition, the Parent Study was

primarily women, which limited the reports from aging men in the sample, and was limited to 2 Waves, when respondents were adolescents and young adults. Further, we did not have consistent measures of emotional support, instrumental support, and financial support throughout Waves I-V, thus leading to a greater use of dichotomous measures across the Waves. Finally, we used the Wave V pre-sample, which led to a decreased sample size. We plan to incorporate the full Wave V sample when it is released in summer 2019.

Despite popular media depictions that assume that parents and children are completely independent from each other after age 18, in a period of a delaying transition to adulthood, parents remain an important source of emotional, instrumental, and financial support from adolescence to adulthood. Our study illuminates that the parent-child relationship is dynamic and varies from both the child and the parent's perspective. Parent-child bonds remain close throughout the life course, from both the child and the parent's perspective, and vary by gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status in important ways that have implications for understanding parent and child well-being across the life course. Emotional support from parents is higher among low-SES adolescents and young adults relative to high-SES adolescents and young adults, which may have implications for understanding child wellbeing across the life span. Specifically, high-SES parents continue to serve as an important source of financial support for their children, which in turn may shape the level of parental support provided during key transitions to adulthood.

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Table 1. Summary Statistics for Analytic Sample.

	Maternal		Paternal		Parent			
Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Range**	**Alpha**
Gender - female	0.52	0.02	0.52	0.02	0.96	0.00	0 to 1	
Race/ethnicity							1 to 4	
White	0.72	0.03	0.77	0.03	0.74	0.01		
Black	0.13	0.02	0.09	0.02	0.13	0.01		
Latinx	0.12	0.02	0.11	0.02	0.11	0.01		
Asian	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.00		
Age of the respondent in Wave I	15.37	0.12	15.29	0.12	41.13	0.14	12 to 67	
Age of the respondent in Wave II	16.37	0.12	16.29	0.12	62.71	0.14	14 to 22	
Age of the respondent in Wave III	21.57	0.12	21.48	0.13	-	-	19 to 27	
Age of the respondent in Wave IV	28.36	0.12	28.28	0.12	-	-	25 to 34	
Age of the respondent in Wave V	36.46	0.12	36.35	0.12	-	-	34 to 80	
Family structure in Wave I								
Two bio parents	0.66	0.02	0.85	0.02	-	-	1 to 4	
Two parents	0.16	0.01	0.14	0.02	-	-		
Single parent	0.18	0.02	0.00	0.01	-	-		
Other	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	-	-		
Maternal/Parental education in Wave I							1 to 5	
<HS	0.14	0.01	0.12	0.01	0.13	0.01		
HS grad or GED	0.33	0.02	0.33	0.02	0.32	0.01		
Some college	0.21	0.01	0.21	0.02	0.32	0.01		
Completed college+	0.28	0.02	0.30	0.03	0.23	0.01		
Don't know	0.04	0.01	0.03	0.01	-	-		
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT								
Maternal closeness							1 to 5	
Wave I	4.55	0.03	-	-	-	-		
Wave II	4.34	0.03	-	-	-	-		
Wave III	4.46	0.02	-	-	-	-		
Wave IV	4.56	0.02	-	-	-	-		
Wave V	4.14	0.03	-	-	-	-		
Paternal closeness							1 to 5	
Wave I	-	-	4.35	0.04	-	-		
Wave II	-	-	4.11	0.04	-	-		
Wave III	-	-	4.23	0.04	-	-		
Wave IV	-	-	4.30	0.04	-	-		
Wave V	-	-	3.87	0.04	-	-		
Parents' relationship quality with child in Wave I	-	-	-	-	4.19	0.02	1 to 5	0.73
Parents' emotional support from child in Wave II					2.66	0.01	0 to 3	
COMMUNICATION								
Satisfaction with communication with mother							1 to 5	
Wave I	4.07	0.04	-	-	-	-		
Wave II	4.06	0.04	-	-	-	-		
Wave IV	4.49	0.02	-	-	-	-		
Satisfaction with communication with father							1 to 5	
Wave I	-	-	4.03	0.05	-	-		
Wave II	-	-	3.92	0.05	-	-		
Wave IV	-	-	4.28	0.04	-	-		

Table 1, Continued. Summary Statistics for Analytic Sample.

Variable	Maternal		Paternal		Parent		
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Range**
INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT							
Helped children in the past year in Wave II	-	-	-	-	0.87	0.01	0 to 1
Children helped parents in the past year in Wave II	-	-	-	-	0.68	0.01	0 to 1
Can rely on children to help in Wave II	-	-	-	-	0.89	0.00	0 to 1
FINANCIAL SUPPORT							
Parental Financial Assistance							
Any allowance in Wave I	0.52	0.02	0.54	0.02	-	-	0 to 1
Any allowance in Wave II	0.48	0.02	0.50	0.03	-	-	0 to 1
Any money from parent in Wave III	0.70	0.02	0.71	0.02	-	-	0 to 1
Any money from parent in Wave IV	0.38	0.02	0.38	0.02	-	-	0 to 1
Parental financial support in Wave V	0.25	0.02	0.25	0.02	-	-	0 to 1
Gave money to children in Wave II	-	-	-	-	0.65	0.01	0 to 1
Children gave money to parents in Wave II	-	-	-	-	0.33	0.01	0 to 1
N	1767-1780 for maternal sample						
Note: Variables in italics are reports from parents of Add Health respondents	1231-1232 for paternal sample						
	2127-2141 for parent sample						

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Parent-Child Relationships by Gender.

	Child		Parent	
Variable Name	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT				
Maternal closeness				
Wave I	4.63	4.48*	-	-
Wave II	4.38	4.29	-	-
Wave III	4.48	4.44	-	-
Wave IV	4.55	4.57	-	-
Wave V	4.10	4.17	-	-
Paternal closeness				
Wave I	4.46	4.26*	-	-
Wave II	4.32	3.92*	-	-
Wave III	4.34	4.13*	-	-
Wave IV	4.38	4.22	-	-
Wave V	3.90	3.85	-	-
Parents' relationship quality with children in Wave I	-	-	4.16	4.19
Parents' emotional support from child in Wave II	-	-	2.68	2.66
COMMUNICATION				
Satisfaction with communication with mother				
Wave I	4.17	3.98*	-	-
Wave II	4.14	3.98*	-	-
Wave IV	4.53	4.45	-	-
Satisfaction with communication with father				
Wave I	4.11	3.95*	-	-
Wave II	4.05	3.80*	-	-
Wave IV	4.33	4.24	-	-
INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT				
Helped child in Wave II	-	-	0.86	0.87
Children helped parent in Wave II	-	-	0.58	0.69
FINANCIAL SUPPORT				
Parental Financial Assistance				
Any allowance in Wave I	0.54	0.51	-	-
Any allowance in Wave II	0.48	0.48	-	-
Any money from parent in Wave III	0.70	0.70	-	-
Any money from parent in Wave IV	0.36	0.40	-	-
Parental financial support in Wave V	0.25	0.26	-	-
Parent provided money to children in Wave II	-	-	0.66	0.65
Children provided money to parent in Wave II	-	-	0.23	0.34

* - indicates significant difference from men at the p<0.05-level.

N 1767-1780 for maternal sample
1231-1232 for paternal sample
2127-2141 for parent sample

Note: Variables in italics are reports from parents of Add Health respondents

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Parent-Child Relationships by Race and Ethnicity.

Variable Name	White	Black	Latinx	Asian
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT				
Maternal closeness				
Wave I	4.54	4.61	4.71	4.24[bc]
Wave II	4.32	4.51[a]	4.32	3.98[ab]
Wave III	4.44	4.60[a]	4.58	4.05[abc]
Wave IV	4.53	4.75[a]	4.63	4.32[b]
Wave V	4.09	4.34[a]	4.30	4.00
Paternal closeness				
Wave I	4.35	4.46	4.40	4.19
Wave II	4.10	4.30	4.10	3.88
Wave III	4.23	4.18	4.35	3.95
Wave IV	4.27	4.53[a]	4.48	3.99[bc]
Wave V	3.85	4.03	4.06[a]	3.55[bc]
Parents' relationship quality w/ child in Wave I	4.18	4.06[a]	4.34[ab]	4.38[ab]
Parents' emotional support from child in Wave II	2.65	2.66	2.71	2.71
COMMUNICATION				
Satisfaction with communication with mother				
Wave I	4.09	4.06	4.14	3.67
Wave II	4.04	4.15	4.20	3.68[bc]
Wave IV	4.47	4.66[a]	4.52	4.13[b]
Satisfaction with communication with father				
Wave I	4.01	4.29	4.04	3.96
Wave II	3.90	4.10	3.89	3.89
Wave IV	4.29	4.26	4.32	4.03
INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT				
Helped child in Wave II	0.90	0.86	0.67[ab]	0.96[abc]
Child helped parent in Wave II	0.68	0.76[a]	0.57[ab]	0.80[c]
FINANCIAL SUPPORT				
Parental Financial Assistance				
Any allowance in Wave I	0.51	0.58	0.53	0.67
Any allowance in Wave II	0.46	0.58	0.44	0.66
Any money from parent in Wave III	0.70	0.68	0.68	0.77
Any money from parent in Wave IV	0.35	0.52[a]	0.39	0.46
Parental financial support in Wave V	0.23	0.40[a]	0.25[b]	0.22
Parent provided money to child in Wave II	0.68	0.61[a]	0.44[ab]	0.81[bc]
Child provided money to parent in Wave II	0.28	0.55[a]	0.38[ab]	0.51[a]

[a] - indicates significant difference from whites, [b] - from blacks, and [c] - from Latinx at the p<0.05-level.

N — 1767-1780 for maternal sample; 1231-1232 for paternal sample; 2127-2141 for parent sample

Note: Variables in italics are reports from parents of Add Health respondents

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Parent-Child Relationships by Maternal Education

Variable Name	<HS	HS	Some college	College+	Don't know
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT					
Maternal closeness					
Wave I	4.64	4.58	4.47[a]	4.55	4.52
Wave II	4.57	4.37[a]	4.22[a]	4.31[a]	4.03[a]
Wave III	4.56	4.47	4.41[a]	4.47	4.22
Wave IV	4.55	4.57	4.53	4.58	4.47
Wave V	4.25	4.06	4.07	4.23[b]	4.12
Paternal closeness					
Wave I	4.32	4.41	4.32	4.31	4.60
Wave II	4.07	4.16	4.12	4.07	4.02
Wave III	4.36	4.26	4.17	4.21	3.96[a]
Wave IV	4.25	4.28	4.34	4.29	4.38
Wave V	3.75	3.88	3.80	3.97	3.91
Parents' relationship quality with children in Wave I	4.20	4.20	4.10[b]	4.28[bc]	-
Parents' emotional support from child in Wave II	2.69	2.65	2.62	2.70	-
COMMUNICATION					
Satisfaction w/ communication w/ mother					
Wave I	4.09	4.13	3.95[b]	4.12	3.84
Wave II	4.23	4.13	3.88[ab]	4.04	3.96
Wave IV	4.36	4.49	4.44	4.58[ac]	4.49
Satisfaction w/ communication w/ father					
Wave I	3.85	4.15	3.98	4.01	4.06
Wave II	3.78	3.99	3.89	3.93	3.78
Wave IV	4.27	4.30	4.23	4.30	4.31
INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT					
Helped children in the past year in Wave II	0.80	0.86	0.87[a]	0.92[abc]	-
Child helped parents in the past year in Wave II	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.71	-
FINANCIAL SUPPORT					
Parental Financial Assistance					
Any allowance in Wave I	0.56	0.51	0.48	0.55	0.56
Any allowance in Wave II	0.49	0.47	0.46	0.52	0.40
Any money from parent in Wave III	0.60	0.64	0.70[a]	0.81[abc]	0.81[ab]
Any money from parent in Wave IV	0.40	0.43	0.30[b]	0.36b	0.45
Parental financial support in Wave V	0.30	0.22	0.26	0.26	0.26
Gave money to children in Wave II	0.40	0.61[a]	0.66[a]	0.84[abc]	-
Child gave money to parents in Wave II	0.32	0.33	0.31	0.38	-

[a] - indicates significant difference from <HS, [b] - from HS, [c] - from some college, and [d] - from college+ at the p<0.05-level.

N: 1767-1780 for maternal sample; 1231-1232 for paternal sample; 2127-2141 for parent sample

Note: Variables in italics are reports from parents of Add Health respondents